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Military History Work on Level of Today's Demands

18010027a Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 9, Sep 87 (signed to press 21 Aug 87) pp 12-16

[Conference report by Col V.P. Krikunov and Lt Col B.Ye. Pestov: "military-historical Work on a Level of Today's Demands (A Conference of Military Historians)"]

[Text] On 30 June 1987, the USSR Ministry of Defense and the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army and Navy conducted a conference for military historians where they examined the problems of improving the quality and effectiveness of military-historical work in the Armed Forces on the basis of the demands of the 27th CPSU Congress.

The conference was opened by the Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Col Gen M.A. Gareyev. He focused the participants on a profound analysis of the state of military-historical work and urged that opinions be exchanged, that they determine specifically what needs improving and outline the basic areas of activity for the commanders, the political bodies and the scientific institutions in the area of military history.

The reports by the Chief of the Military Science Directorate of the General Staff, Lt Gen Ye.A. Kuznetsov, and the Deputy Chief of the Propaganda and Agitation Directorate of the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army and Navy, Lt Gen N.V. Shapalin gave objective analyses of military-historical work in the troops, the VUZes, the scientific research institutes of the USSR Ministry of Defense, the archives as well as military-historical questions in the press.

At present, an extensive network of military-historical organizations has been established and this includes the Institute of Military History of the USSR Ministry of Defense, more than 10 chairs on the history of military art (the history of wars and military art), scores of chairs of operational-tactical disciplines at the VUZes, the *Voyenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, the military-historical section of the newspaper *Krasnaya Zvezda*, the two editorial offices of *Voyenizdat*, the 39 archives, 17 military-historical sections under the officer clubs as well as hundreds of military museums and military-scientific libraries. Working in them are over 2,000 military historians, including 36 doctors and 150 candidates of historical sciences.

Regardless of this, the number of military-historical studies has declined in recent years. Many scientific research works and studies are of a low scientific level, the military historians have done little work in the archives while military-historical work in the troops has assumed the traits of formalism both in planning and execution. The weakness in organization and the lack of depth in the military-historical projects is one of the most vulnerable places in the entire system of historical work. As a result, military-historical science is still not contributing completely to carrying out the tasks confronting the Armed Forces. In the reports, particular attention was directed to the necessity of disclosing and eliminating the causes of stagnation phenomena which impede the elaboration of urgent problems of military history. The tasks have been posed of studying and analyzing the most important problems of military-historical, particularly the questions of the conduct of operations in the initial period of the war, considering the mistakes of the command in preparing to repel Nazi aggression. More attention should be directed to the experience of the organizing and conduct of combat, its complete support, troop control as well as the organizational development of the Armed Forces in the postwar period.

At present, all military-historical work should be determined not by the number of scientific research works and not by the volume of the monographs and reports but rather by real scientific achievements and discoveries which would make it possible to determine and scientifically establish the ways for carrying out the tasks confronting the Armed Forces. This is the main task of all the military-historical bodies. The military-historical Institute should become the main coordinator of the work.

At the scientific research institutes, the staffs and political bodies directly responsible for this area, there is an acute shortage of highly skilled personnel and historians who possess profound knowledge of contemporary military affairs. There are few young specialists and as a result there has not been an orderly succession in work. The average age of the doctors of historical sciences is over 60.

Also seriously alarming is the fact that among the military historians there are not enough specialists in the area of the organizational development of the Armed Forces, military strategy, troop control and the theory of the Armed Services. There has not been effective training of the graduate students, the periods for working out and defending dissertations are long (up to 10 years) and the subjects of some do not meet the real needs for them. Work with the graduate students in the VUZes has been poorly organized and there is a lack of incentive for creative growth. All of this acutely poses the question of putting the system for training scientific personnel into order.

The speakers as well as the later commenting Lt Gen (Ret) N.G. Pavlanko, Col A.G. Khorkov and others expressed great concern over the insufficiently high level of the military-historical work in the troops.

The military-historical knowledge of the soldiers and sergeants particularly in the area of the history of the Great Patriotic War, virtually does not increase during their service. And all of this is in spite of the optimistic reports on the work done which describe conferences, meetings with veterans, the work of museums, the viewing of military-historical films as well as much else.

Due to proper leadership by the commanders and staffs, military-historical work is not sufficiently reflected in the plans of military and political training and does not serve as a strong means for increasing combat readiness of the troops. Many staffs do not search for ways to solve the problems of planning, organizing and conducting combat and an operation considering the experience of the past.

military-historical experience is little used in commander exercises, in troop and command-staff exercises and staff drills. Rarely do the study plans include elements of the military art of the Great Patriotic War and local wars. In the course of the exercises, as a rule, a situation is not created which would force the trainees to resort to the acquired experience and on the basis of it carry out the combat tasks with modern means and forces.

In assessing the state of military-historical work in the troops, one cannot help but conclude that it must be fundamentally restructured. It should be concrete and purposeful and meet the needs of the combat readiness of the troops. The connection of military-historical work in the troops must be strengthened with the plans of the military-historical Institute, the VUZes and archives. This can be achieved by the joint planning and execution of military-historical work.

The report by Lt Gen Ye.A. Kuznetsov and the comments by Lt Gen V.A. Matsulenko, Capt 1st Rank V.S. Shlomin and Col R.A. Savushkin took up in detail the questions of military-historical training for military personnel in the VUZes. The criterion for the training of the students and officer candidates is their ability to creatively apply the obtained knowledge in their practical work. But not all are still able to do this. One of the reasons for this is the low level of the teaching of military history. There has been a rigidity of its forms and methods, a poor historical level of other (special) military disciplines, but most importantly a significant divorcing of the instruction in the VUZes from the life of the troops.

For a general and officer striving for military art, it is not enough to have a mere knowledge of the descriptions of campaigns, operations and battles. It is important to

learn to apply this knowledge in practice. In battle a commander, in addition, must have creativity, common sense, initiative and a firm character.

At present, under the conditions of the possible waging of war with the employment of modern weapons and considering our defensive doctrine, there must be a more profound and concrete study of combat experience. For this there must be not only a close tie with the troops but also new training programs and methods.

Maj Gen I.Ye. Krupchenko described how this problem is being solved at the Academy of the Armored Troops. The faculty has made substantial changes in the content and methods of conducting the exercises on the leading disciplines. The aim of the lectures and seminars at present is not to learn by rote the factual material on the wars, battles and operations but rather a profound analysis of the most important problems of tactics and operational art, the ways of solving them during the years of the last war and the employment of this experience under present-day conditions.

In the program they have decisively increased the time spent on practical exercises. At present, group exercises and seminars will take up 30 percent of the training time assigned to the discipline. A practical focus has been given also to the other types of training exercises: for the first time 10 percent of the training time will be allotted for independent work of the students under the leadership of an instructor.

As before, the lecture remains the main form of the training process. The main advantage of it is that it makes it possible to gain information on the most recent achievements in the area of theory and practice, that is, the information which is not yet in the textbook. But the academy has gone farther on this question. In giving the lectures they have begun employing the special-problem approach, that is, to pay chief attention to examining the most urgent problems of military art. From the example of the studied military-historical event or period of time, they go into the reasons for the rise of the designated problem, the ways and means for solving it following the experience of the operations of the Great Patriotic War and, what is particularly important, they show the importance of this experience for today.

The number of seminars has been reduced. By this time has been freed for holding group exercises using maps as well as in the field. Here the students have an opportunity, in playing the role of certain officials, to actually encompass all the organizing activities of the commander and staff in preparing for the operation (battle) and for controlling the troops in the course of combat.

All these changes have told positively not only on the military-historical but also the general training of the students.

Maj Gen N.I. Lutsev and Capt 1st Rank V.S. Shlomin emphasized the growing importance of the archives in all military-historical work. Unfortunately, in recent years the military historians have begun to work less in the archives and this has reduced the scientific and historical value of not only the publications for the troops but also the fundamental works for researchers and teachers. Of the more than 10 million archival documents from the period of the Great Patriotic War, only one-fifth has been studied, including 60 percent on operational art and 10 percent on tactics. The historians have worked through only 8-10 percent of the 9 million archival documents of the postwar period. Virtually no study has been made of the problems of training the personnel, establishing reserves, staff work and so forth. The scale of the research has also declined. Analysis shows that while in the first 20 years after the war the documents of the central apparatus, the fronts and the armies were studied in their majority, in recent years the center of attention has been on the materials of the units and formations which can be explained by the necessity of writing their campaign record.

Maj Gen Yu.Ya. Krishin, in describing the work on the second edition of the *Sovetskaya Voennoye Entsiklopediya* [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], took up the shortcomings of the first edition and the development of military-historical science as a whole. In order to avoid stagnation and errors in military-historical science, it is essential to work out a precise and long-term plan for its development.

In taking up the military-historical work of the military scientific societies, Col Gen (Ret) A.I. Kozhevnikov, made a number of proposals to improve this. The Military Science Directorate of the General Staff, he feels, should assume the role of coordinator of the work under the military scientific societies at the district officer clubs. In his opinion, it would be a good thing at least once every 2 years to conduct history training courses for the instructors of these societies to exchange experience. The necessity has arisen of planning the work of the societies in the area of military-patriotic indoctrination together with the councils of the war, labor and Armed Forces veterans. The time has come to adjust and possibly revise the Regulation Governing Military Scientific Societies Under the Officer Clubs of the Soviet Army and Navy.

Many critical comments were addressed to Voenizdat in the statement of Gen M.M. Kiryan and Lt Gen (Ret) A.V. Vladimirov. In particular it was pointed out that Voenizdat frequently violates the dates for publishing books, although it is clear to everyone that the troops and the VUZes must be immediately supplied with books which drawing on the experience of World War II and local wars disclose the nature and particular features of combat on the defensive and offensive, during the day and at night, in mountains and in the desert, as well as books on intelligence and camouflage and other questions of waging war.

Many speakers said that a good number of works is being published the authors of which very arbitrarily draw on historical facts and they distort the true picture of events. They move to the forefront the tragic aspect of the war, particularly the beginning period, as well as the human sacrifices, hardships and destruction suffered by our nation. This is done to the detriment of the truly epic. Individual works are permeated with hints of abstract pacifism and a condemnation of any war regardless of its class nature and reasons of occurrence.

These errors are to be largely explained by the insufficient military history viewpoint of the authors, by weak creative ties of the literary and artistic workers with military historians and men of the Army and Navy as well as by the incompetence of the critics.

It is the duty of the writers and journalists to describe objectively, persuasively and vividly the heroism and mastery of the Soviet troops. The combat experience of the frontline veterans and their military deeds should find a proper place in the practice and training of the personnel.

The results of the conference were summed up in the speeches of the Deputy Chief of the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army and Navy, Col Gen D.A. Volkogonov and, the Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the USSR Armed Forces, Col Gen M.A. Gareyev.

Col Gen D.A. Volkogonov pointed out that in military-historical science more attention must be paid to the methodological problems of military history and it is essential to master the art of applying the concepts of materialistic dialectics in military-historical research. The elaboration of military-historical works cannot be successful without a profound philosophical analysis and generalization of the facts and events of the past. One of the important areas in the work of the military historians and the military-historical Institute directly should be, in addition to creating fundamental research, the elaboration and publishing of popular, interestingly written, well-illustrated military-historical literature for the mass reader and particularly for the youth.

Col Gen M.A. Gareyev pointed out that the underestimation of history, in particular military history and a view of it as an appendage to scientific and practical activity has always caused harm.

Everyone is well aware that history is not merely the science dealing with the past. If one views it in terms of military affairs, it can be said with confidence that inattention to it leads to undesirable results. Without objective research there cannot be a true science. The military historians on the given question should hold a principled position. Responsible tasks confront all military historians in line with the approaching jubilee in the life of the Soviet people, the 70th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. The pages of the periodic press must publish a series of materials which

thoroughly show the diverse experience of our Leninist party and people in socialist construction, having focused attention on the still unsolved questions and on the relationship of the ideals of October and the current course of the CPSU. Indoctrination by the use of history is an excellent school for civil responsibility and courage and loyalty to the people, to the motherland and to the Communist Party.

Col Gen M.A. Gareyev went on to take up the question of the use of archival documents. All work is useless, he emphasized, if we do not put new archival documents into circulation. The search for and investigation of them are essential in the work of the historians and here there must be a decisive change. It is essential to further improve the processing of the documentary materials, to select and prepare them for publishing, we must improve the organization of the use of the new documents in the interests of military-historical and reference work and make it a wider practice to periodically publish them in the military publishing bodies.

Also reviewed were the questions of conducting historical research for the needs of the Armed Forces, changes in the practice of reviewing works, improving ties with foreign historians, strengthening the ideological struggle in the area of military-historical, the training of personnel and so forth.

Also participating in the work of the conference was the Sector Head of the Science Section of the CPSU Central Committee, D.V. Kuznetsov, Academician S.L. Tikhvinskiy as well as other representatives of the USSR Academy of Sciences, the military scientific institutions of the USSR Ministry of Defense, the military academies, districts and fleets and the Soviet War Veterans Committee.

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High Commands of Sectors in Great Patriotic War
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[Article, published under the heading "Soviet Military Art," by Col V.D. Danilov, candidate of historical sciences: "High Commands of Sectors in the Great Patriotic War"; the article continues the question of the development of the system of strategic leadership bodies with the outbreak of the Great Patriotic War (see issue No 6, 1987)]

[Text] At the end of June 1941, the actions of the Soviet troops against the Nazi assault groupings, which were intended to change the course of events, did not provide the expected success on any of the strategic sectors. Nevertheless, the enemy advance on individual sectors was checked and the rate of advance of the Nazis

dropped. An analysis of combat showed that the enemy continued to build up efforts on three strategic sectors: the northwestern, western and southwestern.

The battle front on Soviet territory had increased by 2 July from 2,000 to 4,000 km. Due to the rapidly changing situation, communications with Hq SHC [Headquarters Supreme High Command] was undependable and it was not possible to establish clear cooperation between the fronts. There were also difficulties in organizing the mobilization of local resources and directing this. Under these conditions for coordinating the actions of the fronts and fleets and for combining the efforts of the troops on the main strategic sectors, by a decree of the GKO [State Defense Committee] of 10 July 1941, three high commands were formed for the sectors: Northwestern, Western and Southwestern. Later by the decision of Hq SHC of 21 April 1942, the High Command of the Northern Caucasus Sector was established in order to combine the efforts of the troops fighting in Sevastopol and on the Kerch Peninsula and defending the Caucasus Coast.(1)

The most essential feature in establishing the high commands of the sectors in July 1941 was the fact that they began to be constituted in a difficult situation. This did not allow the clear definition of their functions and the organization and establishment of the command apparatus.

The functions of the commanders-in-chief, their rights and duties were not strictly regulated by the corresponding provisions and instructions. However, the experience of the commanders-in-chief shows that their tasks consisted in organizing the repelling of the enemy offensive in the zone of the subordinate fronts and the leadership of this. The GKO Decree of 10 July 1941 pointed out the primary measures which should be taken by the C-in-C to prevent the retreat of the field forces and formations without permission from the superior command as well as to maintain high combat and moral spirit of the troops and to initiate a partisan movement in the enemy rear.(2) Subsequently, in their practical activities, the C-in-C were to be guided by the operational-strategic tasks which were set by Hq SHC. Here the front commanders kept the right of appealing directly to Headquarters on fundamental questions related to the carrying out of tasks in the front zone.

Gradually the command structures of the C-in-C of the sectors came into being. Thus, a small group of officers and support and service subunits headed by the Chief of Staff of the Sector, Maj Gen M.V. Zakharov, traveled with MSU K.Ye. Voroshilov on 11 July from Moscow to Leningrad. MSU S.K. Timoshenko, in remaining the commander of the Western Front, in his work relied on the staff of this front. MSU S.M. Budennyi received the GKO decree on his appointment as C-in-C of the Southwestern Sector on 10 July 1941 while in Gomel, and immediately left for the staff of the Southwestern Front

in the Kiev area. Having heard the report of the command on the situation in the front's zone and having given the necessary instructions on organizing the defenses, he arrived in Poltava only early in the morning of 13 July, where upon instructions of Headquarters the staff and other headquarters bodies of the Southwestern Sector should be organized. The military council was established as of 5 August and the chief of staff of the sector was appointed on 28 August.

Up to the middle of August 1941, the TOE of the field headquarters were worked out by the high commands of the sectors themselves and approved by the General Staff. On 16 August 1941, Hq SHC introduced a uniform TO&E for the field headquarters of the C-in-C of the sector. The headquarters included a military council, staff (sections: operations, topographic, intelligence, signals, rear services and military railroads), chief of artillery, Air Forces commander, sections (political, air defense, motor-road), chiefs of services (motor and armored, engineer, chemical defense, fuel supply, medical, veterinary and so forth), support and service units and subunits: signals regiment, security battalion (a rifle battalion, antiaircraft battalion and armored squadron), a separate motor vehicle and motorcycle companies and so forth.(3) Subsequently, the structure and functions of certain bodies, in particular the staff, were adjusted in accord with the developing situation in the zone of the sector.

The staff was the main working body of the C-in-C. It planned and supported the organization of troop control, it prepared the necessary data for the C-in-C for promptly taking a sound decision and carrying it out and also prepared the draft reports and briefings to Hq SHC.

The forms and methods of activity of the high commands of the sectors were determined by the tasks set for them by Hq SHC. Thus, in line with the exceptionally difficult situation on the Western Sector in the summer of 1941, Headquarters focused the main efforts of the high command of this sector on establishing a continuous defensive front, organizing a coordinated thrust at Vitebsk, conducting military operations in the Smolensk area and defeating the Yartsevo-Dukhovshchina Nazi troop grouping.

In the activities of the high command of the Northwestern Sector, significant attention was given to preparing the defensive lines at Leningrad, to organizing the naval flotilla on Lake Onega and directing the development of the partisan movement.

The High Command of the Southwestern Sector in July-August 1941 did extensive work to organize underground party obkoms, gorkoms and raykoms.

The High Command of the Northern Caucasus Sector carried out measures to clear the enemy out of the Crimea, to firmly hold the Sevastopol Defensive Region

as well as prevent the landing of amphibious and airborne forces in the zone of the sector. However, due to the developing situation, it was unable to fully carry out the set tasks and was disbanded by a decision of Headquarters.

For troop control they employed orders, directives, instructions, requests and the decisions taken on them.

A system of personal instructions and orders was employed in the course of the talks of the C-in-C with the front commanders. The documents, as a rule, in a terse manner, assessed the operational situation, pointed out the possible forces, forms and methods of enemy actions and provided specific instructions on supporting the flank, deploying the reserves and so forth.(4)

The methods of issuing the tasks to the executors (personal contact or using technical and mobile communications facilities) were chosen depending upon the situation. The executors also received battle documents in a written form.

Of interest is the form of command employed particularly frequently by Army Gen G.K. Zhukov. This was the sending of brief written ideas to the command of the fronts and armies on operational questions with a request for replies with a statement of their decisions. One such document sent to the commanders of the Western and Kalinin Fronts is a statement signed by the C-in-C of the Western Sector on carrying out the instructions of Headquarters on the procedure for defeating the Rzhev- Vyazma-Yukhnov and Volkhov-Zhizdra-Bryansk Nazi troop groupings. It tersely formulated the main tasks for the troops of the fronts, the procedure for their stage-by-stage fulfillment and the carrying out of secondary operations, and provided the composition of the necessary forces for this, outlined the dates of execution, the methods for preventing the approach of enemy reserves as well as the sequence of preparatory measures.(5) The presence of such a document made it possible for the front and army commanders to clearly assess the operational situation, the ideas of Headquarters and the high command of the sector as well as their own tasks and the methods of carrying them out.

One of the most important functions of the high commands of the sectors was the regular and detailed informing of Hq SHC on the situation in the area of the sectors, the decisions adopted, plans and proposals for planning and conducting the operations. Such information was submitted in the form of written reports as well as in the course of telegraph and telephone conversations of the C-in-Cs, military council members or the chiefs of staff of the sectors. A report usually contained a group of narrow questions and made it possible for Hq SHC to have a thorough understanding of the situation on one or another sector of the front. Thus, the report of 14 July 1941 of the C-in-C of the Western Sector, MSU S.K. Timoshenko contained information on the enemy's position, the axes of its operations, the strength and position

of the sector's troops and the adopted decision. Also stated was a request to reinforce the fronts with aviation, tanks, motor vehicles and to stabilize their delivery of ammunition and draft reinforcements.(6)

The reports to Hq SHC were marked by concreteness and justice and by objectivity in assessing the situation. For example, the report of the high command of the Southwestern Sector to Headquarters on 18 July 1941 emphasized the sharp exacerbation of the situation on the left wing of the Southwestern Front: "1. To restore the position existing prior to the start of the main breakthrough is impossible with the available strength of the front. 2. Further resistance by the 6th and 12th Armies on the held lines could involve their encirclement and destruction piecemeal over the next 1 or 2 days. The stated situation forces me to ask Headquarters to permit the commander of the Southwestern Front to pull back the 6th and 12th Armies to a front of Belaya Tserkov, Tetiyev, Kitay-gorod. In accord with this the right flank of the Southern Front should be pulled back to a line of Kitay-gorod, Trostyanets, Kamenka. The pullback is to be made successively by intermediate lines...."(7)

In the difficult operational situation, a marked role in rationalizing command was played by the Orders of Hq SHC of 13 August 1941. These introduced a procedure for the obligatory submission to Headquarters of the copies of orders and other combat documents from the high commands of the sectors. In this manner less time was spent by the high commands on preparing special reports while Headquarters gained an opportunity to be constantly up on the operational situation on the main strategic axes.

On this level there was particular clarity, brevity and completeness of the essential information in the combat documents of the second establishment of the Western Sector and which were forwarded personally to the chief of the General Staff while particularly important ones went to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. Thus, the order of the C-in-C to the commander of the Kalinin Front of 7 February 1942 drew attention to the fact that the command of the 4th Army "by the blockading of a large number of population points has scattered the army and deprived it of assault and maneuvering strength."(8) In line with this orders were given as to at what points the main efforts of the army should be concentrated. On the following day the C-in-C of the sector issued an order to the 39th Army which drew attention to the overestimation of the actual enemy forces in setting the tasks for the troops.(9) The copies of these documents forwarded to the chief of the General Staff made it possible to effectively inform Hq SHC of the situation on the given sectors of the front and the decisions taken.

Experience suggested the necessity of reports from the C-in-Cs of the sectors to Hq SHC giving their own considerations on certain directives received from Headquarters. For example, the High Command of the Western Sector felt it necessary to report to the Supreme

Commander-in-Chief on 25 March 1943 proposals on carrying out additional measures to build and rebuild the Moscow defensive lines. In particular, it was proposed that the defenses be strengthened by establishing additional intermediate lines, complete the construction of previously unfinished defensive facilities, more actively utilize the irrigation structures existing in the Moscow Area and so forth.(10)

An analysis of the documents also discloses one other very important aspect in the activity of the high commands of the sectors, that is, their cooperation with the local party and soviet bodies on the question of mobilizing forces to rebuff the enemy. Thus, at the end of July 1941, the situation demanded the committing to action of 19 rifle divisions and 5 cavalry divisions which in the organizing area had not been provided with the regulation amount of artillery, small arms, communications, engineer and quartermaster supplies. "The C-in-C and his staff," recalled Col Gen A.P. Pokrovskiy, "undertook measures to provide the lacking amount from local resources. Mar S.M. Budennyi turned on this question to the oblast party and Soviet bodies. In perfectly understanding the situation and the requirements of the troops being organized, they initiated extensive work to provide for them and achieved good results.... Due to the activities of the military council of the Southwestern Sector as well as the local party and soviet bodies, it was possible to accelerate the constituting of reserve formations and at the beginning of August to begin organizing two armies, one for each front."(11)

Thus, the high commands of the sectors organized at the outset of the war made a substantial contribution to organizing the repulsing of the enemy on the main axes of its assault groupings. An analysis of the activities of the high commands makes it possible to correct the widespread assertions on the limited rights of the high commands and their lack of the necessary reserves and materiel to influence the development of the military-strategic situation. As arguments usually examples are given when Hq SHC, in bypassing the high commands, issued orders directly to the front commanders or canceled the orders of the C-in-Cs and also did not make available to them the necessary reserves.

In this context one could give the opinion of MSU I.Kh. Bagramyan. In recalling when he had received or the commander of the Southwestern Front an order from the C-in-C of the Southwestern Sector, MSU S.K. Timoshenko, on leaving the Kiev Fortified Region, I.Kh. Bagramyan writes: "The commander ordered that Headquarters be asked but Headquarters did not approve the order of the C-in-C. At that time we could only guess as to the reasons for such a step. Subsequently it was learned that this was caused by the general military-political situation in which our nation found itself, in continuing to repel the aggressor's attack alone. By this time, as is known, the enemy had blockaded Leningrad and was pushing toward Moscow. Headquarters actually did not have any battle-ready large operational reserves.

The stubborn defense of the Southwestern Front on the line of the Dnieper, in tying down enormous Wehrmacht forces and, particularly importantly, two of the four panzer armies, in this situation relieved conditions on the two remaining sectors of the Soviet-German Front, particularly on the Western (Moscow)."(12) It is essential to bear in mind that along with the military-strategic problems, military-political ones were being solved at the same time, that is, the development and strengthening of the anti-Nazi coalition. "Was it," continued I.Kh. Bagramyan, "that Mar S.K. Timoshenko was wrong in ordering the troops of the Southwestern Front to begin to retreat? Yes, if one judges from the position of the political strategy, but he was right if one bears in mind only the operational situation on the southern wing of the Soviet-German Front."(13) The quoted statement convinces one of the validity of the decisions taken by Hq SHC in terms of the high commands of the sectors and the soundness of the reserves and materiel assigned to them.

During the first period of the war, as the situation stabilized on the front and as Hq SHC gained the necessary experience in directing the troops and establishing dependable contact with them, it was recognized as possible to abandon the intermediate strategic leadership element, the high commands of the sectors. By this time conditions had been created for switching to more effective forms and methods of the influence of Hq SHC on the activities of the fronts. There had been the extensive employment of such, in the expression of MSU G.K. Zhukov, "a very unique institution of strategic leadership"(14) as the representative of Hq SHC.

However, the GKO considered it essential to return to establishing a high command in 1945 in the course of preparing for and conducting the war against imperialist Japan. The institution of the high command underwent further development in the High Command of the Soviet Troops in the Far East.(15) The necessity of establishing an intermediate headquarters element in the Far East was determined by the remoteness, by the size and geographic features of the theater of operations as well as by the involvement of significant forces in the war. However, it was constituted and began operating in a favorable military-political and military-strategic situation arising as a result of the decisive defeat of Nazi Germany and its structure and functions were organized considering the experience acquired at the start of the war.

In the organization and activities of the High Command of the Soviet Troops in the Far East, one can clearly trace the fact that it was not an improvised measure. Although the GKO decree on the appointment of the C-in-C was issued on 30 July and the staff and other bodies on 2 August 1945, in fact their activities had started significantly before. "On 27 April," wrote MSU A.M. Vasilevskiy, "I joined the work on planning the war against Japan.... In May, June and the first days of July, we at the General Staff coordinated the plan of the Far Eastern

Campaign with the front commanders and military council members. By 27 June, the General Staff, proceeding from the strategic decisions taken by Headquarters, had completely finished elaborating the directives for the fronts. On 28 June, they were approved by Headquarters."(16)

In a word, both the organization and the activities of this High Command were marked by great stability, planning, independence, by the presence of the necessary forces and reserves and by stable contact with the troops and Hq SHC.

The activities of the high commands of the sectors were largely determined by the personality of the C-in-C. In this regard one must admit that all the C-in-Cs of the sectors made a major contribution to the defeat of the Nazi Army. They had unassailable authority as prominent Soviet state and military leaders. The Soviet people, the party Central Committee and I.V. Stalin personally had confidence in these generals. We feel that it is essential to comment on such a quality of MSU K.Ye. Voroshilov, S.M. Budennyi and S.K. Timoshenko as the possibility of dealing personally with I.V. Stalin and which was of important significance in the difficult situation of the summer of 1941. It must be emphasized that among the C-in-Cs of the sectors, Army Gen G.K. Zhukov stood out in his exceptional purposefulness, a profoundness of insight and foresight into the development of the military-strategic situation, as well as decisiveness in implementing the planned operational plans. The activities of G.K. Zhukov in the post of C-in-C of the Western Sector can be recognized as one of the vivid pages of Soviet generalship art during the years of the Great Patriotic War.

An analysis of the organization and activities of the high commands of the sectors during the years of the Great Patriotic War makes it possible to draw the following conclusions and generalizations.

Experience has shown that the presence of intermediate strategic leadership elements in the form of the high commands of the sectors made it possible for Hq SHC to hold firmly in its hands all threads of strategic leadership over the Armed Forces and effectively utilize local resources for supporting the armed combat. Such elements justified themselves in the extreme situation on the European strategic sectors as well as in the Far East in a stable military-political and military-strategic situation. Research indicates that the high command of a sector acted very effectively if it was established and prepared in all regards ahead of time.

An analysis of the activities of the high commands has disclosed a diversity of methods for their troop command. The most characteristic were orders, directives, instructions and these were transmitted either in a written form or orally in personal contact and more often over communications equipment. The information from the high commands to Hq SHC was received in writing

in the form of reports or orally in personal contact or over communications equipment. Of interest on this level are the ideas on operational questions forwarded by the C-in-Cs to the subordinate front and army commanders as well as the practice of submitting to Hq SHC copies of the operational documents on the command of the sector troops. Such a method of transmitting operational information both downwards and upwards made it possible to supply the command of the fronts and Hq SHC with the necessary information on the operational-strategic situation.

Research on the documents and materials confirms the decisive role of the personality of the C-in-C in organizing the execution of the tasks posed by Hq SHC for the sector. The party Central Committee and the GKO appointed as the C-in-C of the sector prominent military leaders who were well known in the nation. The significant powers in the party, state and Armed Forces gave the C-in-Cs the opportunity to effectively perform their functions both in terms of the subordinate troops as well as in terms of the local and state bodies and Hq SHC.

Footnotes

1. The Northwestern Sector headed the control of the Northern and Northwestern Fronts, the forces of the Northern and Baltic Fleets. The C-in-C was MSU K.Ye. Voroshilov. Abolished on 27 August 1941. The Western Sector coordinated the actions of the Western Front and the Pinsk Naval Flotilla and later the Western, Reserve and Central Fronts. The C-in-C was MSU S.K. Timoshenko. Abolished on 10 September 1941. It was reestablished on 1 February 1942 in the aim of coordinating the actions of the Western and Kalinin Fronts. The C-in-C was Army Gen G.K. Zhukov. Abolished on 5 May 1942. The Southwestern Sector brought together the control of the Southwestern and Southern and later the Bryansk Fronts as well as the forces of the Black Sea Fleet. The C-in-Cs were MSU S.M. Budennyi (up to 13 September 1941), MSU S.K. Timoshenko (from 13 September 1941). Abolished on 21 June 1942. The Northern Caucasus Sector included the troops of the Crimean Front, the Sevastopol Defensive Region, the Northern Caucasus Military District, as well as forces from the Black Sea Fleet and the Azov Naval Flotilla. The C-in-C was MSU S.M. Budennyi. Abolished on 19 May 1942.

Prior to the war the possibility was envisaged of establishing intermediate strategic leadership elements. Practical measures were taken in this direction. Thus, on 21 June 1941, the Politburo of the VKP(b) Central Committee decreed the unification of leadership over the armies of the High Command Reserve which had advanced to the line of the Dnieper, under the single command of MSU S.M. Budennyi. The leadership of the Southwestern and Southern Fronts was entrusted to Army Gen G.K. Zhukov while the Northern Front went to Army Gen K.A. Meretskov. However, under the

conditions of the commenced war this decision was not carried out (see: V.A. Anfilov, "Bessmertnyy podvig" [An Immortal Feat], Moscow, Nauka, 1971, p 182).

2. "Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna 1941-1945: Entsiklopediya" [The Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945: An Encyclopedia], Moscow, Sov. Entsiklopediya, 1986, p 208.

3. TsAMO [Central Archives of the Ministry of Defense], folio 7, inv. 179415, file 100, sheets 127, 216-220.

4. Ibid., folio 246, inv. 1525, file 12, sheet 23.

5. Ibid., folio 251, inv. 646, file 4, sheets 45-48.

6. Ibid., folio 208, inv. 2513, file 74, sheets 372-376.

7. Ibid., folio 251, inv. 646, file 4, sheets 45-48.

8. Ibid., folio 246, inv. 1525, file 12, sheet 9.

9. Ibid., folio 208, inv. 2513, file 206, sheet 120.

10. Ibid., folio 245, inv. 1525, file 24, sheets 35-37.

11. *Voyenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No 4, 1978, p 68.

12. I.Kh. Bagramyan, "Velikogo naroda synovya" [Sons of a Great People], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1984, p 196.

13. Ibid., pp 196-197.

14. G.K. Zhukov, "Vospominaniya i razmyshleniya" [Remembrances and Reflections], Moscow, Izd-vo APN, 7th Edition, Vol 2, 1986, p 72.

15. The High Command of the Soviet Troops in the Far East, established on 30 June 1945, united the troop command of the Transbaykal, Far Eastern (from 5 August 1945, the Second Far Eastern) Fronts, the Maritime Troop Group (from 5 August, the First Far Eastern Front), as well as the forces of the Pacific Fleet and the Amur Naval Flotilla. The C-in-C was MSU A.M. Vasilevskiy. Abolished after the war.

16. A. Vasilevskiy, "Delo vsey zhizni" [A Cause of One's Entire Life], Moscow, Politizdat, 1983, pp 498, 506.

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Air Defense of Front Second Echelons in Offensive Operations

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[Article by Lt Col A.Ya. Manachinskiy, candidate of military sciences: "Air Defense of Front Second Echelons in Offensive Operations"]

[Text] The Great Patriotic War provided many examples confirming the impossibility of successfully carrying out operations by the ground troops without a dependable cover of the latter by air defense weapons. The Supreme Commander-in-Chief I.V. Stalin pointed to the importance of combating Nazi aviation. "The practices of the war have shown," he wrote, "that the bravest troops become impotent if they are not defended against air strikes."⁽¹⁾ The command of the fronts, in preparing the offensive operations, gave serious attention to the organizing of a troop cover. Hq SHC also took measures to strengthen the air defenses of the formations by the operational and strategic maneuvering of the antiaircraft artillery formations of the RVGK [Reserve Supreme High Command], as well as the formations of antiaircraft artillery and fighter aviation of the National Air Defense Troops.

The experience of conducting the front operations indicated that the successful offensive of the Soviet troops to a great depth and at a rapid pace largely depended upon the committing to battle of the mobile groups, the second echelons and the reserves. The role of the second echelons and the reserves in fighting the enemy rose particularly in the second and third periods of the war. Without them it would have been simply impossible to achieve the operational and strategic successes. For this reason the organizing of dependable air defense for these important elements of the troop operational configuration acquired primary significance in the aim of maintaining their battleworthiness.

The second echelons of the front, from the summer of 1943, as a rule, consisted of one and more rarely two combined-arms armies.⁽²⁾ They were entrusted with carrying out the following tasks: building up the effort on the axis of the main thrust, widening and reinforcing captured bridgeheads, repelling the counterstrikes of the operational enemy reserves and broadening the front of advance towards the breakthrough flanks.⁽³⁾

The committing of the second echelon armies to battle was carried out predominantly after the troops of the fronts had carried out the immediate tasks, that is, on the fourth or fifth day, on the flank or the boundary of two first-echelon combined-arms armies and sometimes in the concluding stages of the front offensive operations (5th Guards Army of the First Ukrainian Front in the Lwow-Sandomierz Operation).⁽⁴⁾ In a situation when

the enemy moved up operational reserves for launching counterstrikes, the second echelons of the fronts were also committed to battle in the course of carrying out the immediate tasks.

The Nazi Command with the aid of aviation endeavored to prevent the moving up, deployment and commitment to battle of the second echelon armies and this required a dependable cover for them against air strikes. It was also essential to organize air defense of the troops in the concentration areas, in moving up, in the commitment to battle, and in the course of the offensive, so that they could maintain their fire and strike power and successfully carry out the set tasks.

The organization of air defenses for the second echelons was substantially influenced by the following: in the concentration areas (forming-up places) by the location of the troops over a large area with the reciprocal distance of the positions of the formations up to 20-30 km and more; in moving up by the large number of routes; by the necessity of covering numerous installations (lines of communications, bridges, crossings) in the zone of the move; by the significant length of the columns; by the insufficient effectiveness of antiaircraft fire as a consequence of carrying it out from unprepared positions and the greater psychological stress on the combat crews; by the complexity of controlling the fire of the antiaircraft artillery and its cooperation with the fighter aviation; in committing the troops to battle by the increased concentration of them on the set line and the great probability of launching air strikes against them.

In preparing the proposals for the organizing of air defense, the deputy army artillery commander for air defense determined the procedure for employing the antiaircraft artillery when the troops were in the concentration areas, when they moved up, deployed into battle formations, were committed to battle as well as in the course of the offensive. Detailed planning of the air defenses was carried out on the basis of the decision of the army commander. Here particular attention was given to organizing the covering of the troops in moving up and commitment to battle by the TOE weapons as well as cooperation with the front's antiaircraft artillery and fighter aviation forces assigned for this purpose. In setting the tasks for the antiaircraft artillery units and subunits, brief conclusions were given from the assessment of the air and ground situation, the time and objectives to be covered were indicated as well as the forces which should be assigned for this. The positions were set, the routes of advance and the direction of movement, the cooperation procedures with the fighter aviation and the troops as well as the time and degree of readiness. The air defense plans were drawn up both on the fronts and in the armies as well as in all antiaircraft regiments and divisions. The latter were coordinated with the command of the troops to be covered.

For air defenses of the front second echelons they organized antiaircraft artillery groups (ZAG) which were

usually based upon antiaircraft artillery divisions (zenad). The battle formations of the ZAG units and subunits were organized so as to provide:

a) A dependable cover for the troops (installations) in the concentration areas, in moving up and in their commitment to battle;

b) The maintaining of continuous and dependable cooperation with the antiaircraft artillery formations and units of the front and the army in which the move-up and commitment to battle were to be carried out as well as with the fighter aviation;

c) Freedom of maneuver for the antiaircraft artillery forces in the aim of strengthening the troop cover on the axis of the main thrust and their survival.

In the concentration areas, the antiaircraft artillery cover for the army second echelons was provided, as a rule, by the units and subunits of the TOE and sometimes attached antiaircraft artillery. In addition, the carrying out of this task involved the front's fighter aviation as well as formations and units of the National Air Defense Troops deployed in these areas. Here the main forces of the antiaircraft artillery covered the positions of the rifle corps planned to fight in the first echelon, the artillery and the command posts. For example, in the course of the Lwow-Sandomierz Operation, the 5th Guards Army in the forming-up place was covered by the 29th Antiaircraft Artillery Division consisting of the 1360th, 1366th and 1372d Small-Caliber (MZA) Regiments and the 1374th Medium-Caliber Antiaircraft Artillery (SZA) Regiment. The MZA regiments covered, respectively, the XXXII, XXXIII and XXXIV Guards Rifle Corps. Subsequently, according to the air defense plan, they were to move in march columns moving up to the starting line for the engagement. In the Berlin Operation, the 28th Army (First Ukrainian Front) in the concentration area was covered by the 607th MZA Regiment. In addition, another three antiaircraft artillery regiments covered the railheads in the Fraustadt area.(5)

However, certain armies comprising the second echelons did not have air TOE air defense weapons in the concentration areas. Thus, in the Iasi-Kishinev Operation, the 53d Army (commander, Lt Gen I.M. Managarov) was covered only by the general air defense system of the Second Ukrainian Front. Only in the aim of increasing the dependable cover in the commitment to battle did the front's air defense plan envisage the reinforcing of the army with one zenad from the 52d Army.

The absence of antiaircraft weapons in a number of second echelon armies of the fronts during the third period of the war is explained by the fact that starting from the end of 1943, the Nazi Command was no longer able to assign large bomber forces for attacking their concentration areas. In addition, the air defenses of the first operational echelons of the fronts' troops by this

time had become sufficiently effective and insurmountable for the air enemy. The individual aircraft groups which broke through to the concentration areas of the second echelons did not represent a serious danger to them. For this reason, the front commanders further strengthened the air defenses for the first operational echelons at the expense of the RVGK zenad units.

In the concentration areas limitations were imposed on firing for camouflage purposes. The antiaircraft artillery fired only at group air targets directly threatening the troops. Here control of the air defense weapons was provided from the command post of the regiment and the division. When the enemy bomber groups were heading away from the covered areas, the antiaircraft artillery did not open fire.

In the process of moving up the second echelon armies, vulnerability of the troop columns en route increased, particularly in coming out in open terrain, in passing through narrows and crossing water obstacles. For this reason in organizing air defense, particular attention was given to an optimum allocation of the TOE and attached antiaircraft artillery among the columns as well as to resolving questions of maintaining close cooperation with the air defense forces of that field force in the zone of which they were to move up. The antiaircraft artillery units and subunits covered the march columns on the march, repelling enemy air raids while on the move and from short halts. The personnel of the covered units (subunits) provided aid to the antiaircraft gunners in crossing difficult areas of the route and prevented them from falling behind the troops. Bridges, crossings, defiles and transport junctions on the routes were usually covered by antiaircraft weapons of the front and the National Air Defense Troops.

Fighter aviation was widely employed for air defense of the troops when they moved simultaneously along several routes. The basic method of operations for the fighter groups was an air alert in set zones (areas). Moreover, for strengthening air defenses they frequently maneuvered the antiaircraft artillery formations and units of the fronts into the zones of advance of the armies. Thus, on 21 April 1945, in the course of the Berlin Operation, for reinforcing the advancing troop grouping of the First Ukrainian Front the 28th Army (commander, Lt Gen A.A. Luchinskiy) began to move up from the second echelon. It moved up in the zone of advance of the 3d Guards Tank Army the air defenses of which had been previously strengthened by the units of the 23d zenad. In addition, the front's command additionally moved the 71st zenad into the area of Zossen, Baruth and Topitz in the aim of defending the lines of communications on the southern approaches to Berlin.(6) The air cover of the troops was carried out by formations and units of the II Fighter Air Corps which in operational terms was under the command of the 3d Guards Tank Army.(7) As a result, the 28th Army, although without receiving air defense reinforcements,

was still dependably covered on the lines of communications both by antiaircraft artillery and fighter aviation. This made it possible for it to carry out the set task and by 23 April a portion of the forces had reached the Teltow Canal without losses.

The enemy aviation operated most intensely against the troops in the front second echelons when they were committed to battle and this required particularly clear organization of the air defense on these lines. For strengthening the antiaircraft cover the command, as a rule, maneuvered the antiaircraft artillery and by so doing endeavored to establish a multilayered zone of solid fire on the approaches to the troops deploying into battle formations as well as over them with the necessary density in terms of directions and altitudes. The MZA regiments concentrated their efforts on covering the first echelons of the troops being committed to battle and the SZA regiments did the same for the second echelons. The MZA batteries were positioned up to 2 km apart and the SZA up to 5 km and this ensured the firing of several batteries against a single target and at the same time their reciprocal fire cover.

In addition, for improving the air defenses for the second echelons, the antiaircraft artillery formations and units from the first echelon armies maneuvered toward the flanks of the second echelon armies. Here they compacted their battle formations and as a result dependable fire coordination was achieved between all the weapons and on the approaches to the start line two or three layers of antiaircraft artillery fire were created. This increased the survival of the units and subunits of antiaircraft artillery and antiaircraft machine guns and reduced the losses of the approaching troops from enemy air strikes.

During the period of deploying the troops into battalion and company columns, the antiaircraft artillery concentrated its efforts on combating enemy aircraft operating over the battlefield and primarily at low altitudes. Each group of Nazi bombers was fired on if possible right until reaching the specific objective and the dropping of the bombs. Moreover, a portion of the batteries of the antiaircraft regiments was held in reserve to be used to combat newly appearing air targets. In covering particularly important objectives (army artillery groups, command posts, crossings and so forth) the air defense weapons carried out concentrated fire to prevent diving.

The front fighters here patrolled in the assigned areas on the flanks of the army being committed to battle or ahead of the start line. In each zone (10-12 km along the front and in depth) there were usually two or three patrol groups consisting of from a pair of aircraft up to a squadron. The fighters attacked the air enemy predominantly at the distant approaches to the line while the antiaircraft artillery fired at it at the near approaches or when it appeared directly over the troops being covered.

Depending upon the intensity of the Nazi air raids and the configuration of the ZAG of the first operational echelons of the fronts, the regiments of the antiaircraft artillery divisions of the second echelon armies moved up to the starting line ahead of time or followed in the troop columns. For example, in the course of the Lwow-Sandomierz Operation for defeating the enemy grouping attacking from the area of Melets, the Commander of the First Ukrainian Front, MSU I.S. Konev, from the morning of 4 August 1944 committed to battle the 5th Guards Army (commander, Lt Gen A.S. Zhadov) with the subsequent arrival at the bridgehead to widen and reinforce it. The cover for the army troops in commitment to battle and in crossing the Vistula River under the conditions of active enemy air operations was carried out by the forces of the 29th zenad and the 9th Guards Fighter Division under the command of Twice Hero of the Soviet Union, Col A.I. Pokryshkin.

Air defense for crossings was provided from the west bank by a total of 10 antiaircraft artillery batteries and from the east bank by 30. The battle formations of the 5th Guards Army were directly covered by 15 batteries. A dependable and continuous antiaircraft artillery cover for the troops being committed to battle was achieved by having the air defense weapons take up firing positions ahead of time on the set line. In the course of the firing, the antiaircraft units maneuvered and maintained contact with the staffs of the combined-arms units and formations in the zones of their action. The use of a large amount of antiaircraft artillery sharply reduced the effectiveness of the Nazi air strikes and ensured the successful actions of the front's second echelon on the captured bridgehead. By 8 August the 5th Guards Army had carried out the set mission and had reached the line of Szedlow, Stopnica, Nowy-Korczyn.(8)

Thus, the experience of the Great Patriotic War showed that the organizing of air defense for the second echelons had specific features during the various stages of their actions. In the concentration areas this was strongly influenced by the dispersion of the troops over a large area. The cover was provided by the units and subunits of the TOE and attached antiaircraft artillery. Also involved in carrying out this task were the fighter aviation of the fronts and the forces of the National Air Defense Troops. The amount of forces involved depended upon the strength of the opposing enemy air grouping and upon the nature of its actions.

In the course of moving up the second echelons, when they were more vulnerable to air attack, the TOE and attached antiaircraft forces moved in the columns of the covered troops. Antiaircraft artillery and fighter aviation from the fronts were also involved in covering the routes of advance.

Particular attention was paid to air defense for the second echelons during their commitment to battle. At this time, the greatest activity of enemy aviation was noted. For this reason, the decisive massing of air

defense forces was a major condition for reducing the losses to the troops being covered caused by enemy air strikes. The deeply echeloned configuration of the anti-aircraft artillery groupings ensured the establishing of a multilayered zone of solid fire and freedom of maneuver for the units and subunits in the aim of concentrating the anti-aircraft efforts on the most important directions and at the main altitudes of flight of the Nazi aircraft. Here the successful combating of enemy aviation in all the stages was largely aided by the organizing of precise and continuous cooperation of the air defense forces involved in the operations.

Footnotes

1. "Perepiska Predsedatelya Soveta Ministrov SSSR s prezidentami SShA i premyer-ministrami Velikobritanii vo vremya Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny 1941-1945 gg." [Correspondence of the Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers With the U.S. Presidents and British Prime Ministers During the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Moscow, Politizdat, 2d Edition, Vol 2, 1976, p 32.

2. See: "Istoriya voyennogo iskusstva" [History of Military Art], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1986, p 373.

3. See: *Voyenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No 8, 1986, pp 23- 29.

4. The 5th Guards Army, according to the data in the "Istoriya voyennogo iskusstva" [History of Military Art] (Moscow, Voenizdat, 1984, p 393), was the front's second echelon but according to the data of "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945] (Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 9, 1978, p 90), it was the front reserve.

5. See: "Sovetskaya artilleriya v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941- 1945 gg." [Soviet Artillery in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1960, p 693.

6. See: *Ibid.*, p 701.

7. See: "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...", Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 10, 1979, p 333.

8. *Ibid.*, Vol 9, p 91.

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Preparation of Troops to Breach Deeply Echeloned Enemy Defense
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[Article by Col N.V. Shevchenko, candidate of military sciences: "Preparation of Troops to Breach Deeply Echeloned Enemy Defense"]

[Text] In the course of the offensive operations of the last war, the Soviet troops encountered the problem of breaching prepared enemy defenses. This arose particularly acutely from the summer of 1943.

By this time, the Nazi Army had begun everywhere to establish a deeply echeloned and well equipped defense. The Nazi Command paid most attention to the preparation of the tactical zone. Here the enemy concentrated up to 80 percent of all its forces. As a rule, the tactical defensive zone consisted of two areas. The first (main) one was defended by the first echelon infantry divisions while the second was taken up by the corps reserve or a second echelon. The main area included three positions and had a depth of 6-8 km. The second area was established some 10-12 km away from the forward edge and usually consisted of two positions and was 3-5 km deep.(1) On the defensive the enemy widely employed man-made obstacles as well as permanent reinforced concrete and other structures.

The breaching of such a defense required on the part of all levels of commanders careful preparation of the troops, the establishing of predominant superiority over the enemy on the axis of the main thrust, courage and boldness, high combat skill and the skillful employment of the forces in the aim of carrying out this task.

During the Great Patriotic War, the breaching of the enemy defenses in an operation was carried out by the assault groupings of the front on one, two and sometimes three sectors or by an army, as a rule, on one sector. The width of a breakthrough sector was 20-30 km for a front, 6-14 km for an army, 4-6 km for a corps and 2-2.5 km for a division.(2)

In the given article we have paid chief attention to the preparing of the troops and the staffs to breach the enemy defense to the tactical depth.

The troops broke through deeply echeloned enemy defenses full of weapons and carefully organized in engineer terms in the course of the Orel (12 July-18 August 1943), Belorussian (23 June-29 August 1944), Vistula-Oder (12 January-3 February 1945), East Prussian (13 January-25 April 1945) and Berlin (16 April-8 May 1945) Offensive Operations. The experience of the combat training for the staffs and troops involved in these operations merits a careful study and generalization.

Combat training was carried out in the units and formations of the operational army and the reserve. This included: individual training for the soldiers, the crew members, as well as training for the subunits, units and formations, the commanders and staffs. The combat training for the troops in the operational army was organized and conducted depending upon the situation and was most intensely carried out during a period of the stabilizing of the front line or a lull.

Conditions for combat training were better in the troops in the reserve, in the second echelons or in troops pulled back for bringing up to strength or reconstituting. But it was also carried out in the formations and units of the armies fighting in the first echelon of the operational configuration of the front.(3)

The staff planned the combat training. The army order set the dates for conducting it, the subjects, the duration of the training for the staffs, officer personnel and troops. Here special attention was paid to conducting all the planned exercises regardless of the season and time of day or the state of weather. The duration of the combat training for an army was determined by the time allotted to prepare the operation and by the nature of combat. Thus, the 11th Guards Army of the Third Belorussian Front before the East Prussian Operation, the 21st Army of the Leningrad Front before the Vyborg Operation (10-20 June 1944) and the 7th Army of the Karelian Front before the Svir-Petrozavodsk (21 June-9 August 1944) Operation had around a month for combat training.

The 2d Guards Tank Army prepared for the Vistula-Oder Operation for around 2 months. During the first month all the training questions were worked out without the equipment and not at full strength, while in the second month they were in full TOE strength and with the equipment.(4)

Great attention was given to the training of the officers and to developing coordination among the headquarters bodies. For these purposes they conducted exercises, staff drills, command-staff exercises and tactical exercises.

At the exercises and courses the officers studied the experience of previous battles, they improved their procedural skills, they gained skills in organizing and maintaining cooperation with adjacent units and with the attached and supporting forces, and worked on the questions of battle control. Drills were conducted with the staff officers in the performing of their functional duties as well as for covert troop control employing procedure tables and coded maps. These drills took up two or three exercises a week.

In conducting military games with the commanders of the corps and divisions and the chiefs of staff they employed terrain mock-ups where they worked through the tasks of the forthcoming operation. For example, in preparing the 28th Army of the Third Belorussian Front

for the East Prussian Operation, during the command-staff games they worked on the following subjects: "breaching a fortified enemy defensive area," "exploiting the success deep in the enemy defenses and supporting the commitment of the mobile formations to the breach" and "eliminating large enemy centers of resistance."

Exercises were conducted with the officer personnel to study the combat and technical capabilities of the weapons, the reinforcements, for improving skills in setting tasks for subordinates, in organizing and conducting observation during the offensive and particularly deep in the enemy defenses, in controlling the units and subunits in battle and in organizing and maintaining constant cooperation.

In the interests of improving the level of procedural training, each day during the second half of the day at least 3 hours were devoted to instructor-procedural exercises with the subunit commanders. The units held demonstration exercises with officer personnel on tactical and weapons training.

For working out questions on an integrated level and for their practical reinforcement they conducted command-staff exercises on two levels including: corps—division, division—regiment, regiment—battalion.(5)

In organizing the combat training for the troops, the commanders and staffs were guided by the principle of teaching what would be required in the forthcoming fighting. For this reason the combat training during the preliminary stage was planned in terms of the combat arms and made provision for the instruction of the personnel and the crews as well as for developing combat teamwork among the subunits.

In the concluding stage, due to the fact that the breakthrough was to be made by the joint efforts of all the forces, at combined exercises employing the equipment, they worked out the questions of the cooperation of the infantry with tanks and the artillery with engineer troops and aviation.

The commanders in their order for combat training set specific goals and tasks. The main ones were: to teach the troops to cross numerous obstacles, to seal off and destroy permanent firing emplacements, to fight in trenches, to skillfully and quickly reinforce the achieved success, to repel tank and infantry counterattacks, to conduct decisive pursuit of the enemy, and to breach the intermediate defensive lines without a pause.(6)

The troops were trained on training fields equipped with the type of defense established by the enemy. Some 30-40 percent of the exercises was carried out under conditions of poor visibility or at night. Thus, during the exercises in preparing for the East Prussian Operation in

the Third Belorussian Front they employed enemy pill-boxes, captured equipment and obstacles. In exercises with field firing the troops worked on firing tasks using real targets and this reinforced the confidence of the personnel in their combat equipment, in its superiority over enemy equipment, it improved the combat skill of the tank troops, artillery and infantrymen and made it possible for them to better know the weak points in the enemy equipment.(7) The length of the training day in the combat training process reached 10-12 hours. Significant attention was given to the training of the staffs of the tank battalions and brigades assigned to participate together with the combined-arms formations in the follow-up breaching of the prepared enemy defenses. These units and subunits worked out combat coordination independently. Then the questions of breaching the prepared defenses were worked out at joint command-staff exercises in the field using the communications of the staffs of the combined-arms formations and the tank units and formations. This was the case in the X Tank Corps before the East Prussian Operation(8) and in the VI Guards Tank Corps prior to the Lwow-Sandomierz Operation (13 July-29 August 1944).(9)

On the regiment—battalion level, troop training was carried out on the basis of the orders of the divisional commanders for the combat training. As a rule, this was preceded by demonstration exercises with the officers on the training procedures and for developing combat coordination among the squads, teams, crews, platoons, companies and battalions. All the exercises were conducted in the field with the actual working out of the main questions. Here they extensively used the combat experience gained by the troops in the previous fighting. If time was available for combat training, up to 10 days were allotted within a single month for the training of a crew or squad, up to 6 days for a platoon, up to 8-9 days for a company or battalion, and 6-7 days for a battalion or regiment.(10) The training ended with a regimental (brigade) tactical exercise involving field firing.

At the beginning of the training, the platoons and then the rifle companies successively worked through the questions: "assault on an enemy dug in a trench," "reinforcing a captured line" and "eliminating individual enemy permanent emplacements and strongpoints."

In the training of the battalions and regiments, chief attention was given to such subjects as: "a march by a rifle battalion with combat security measures," "meeting battle, pursuit of the retreating enemy," "repelling enemy infantry and tank counterattacks," and "an enemy night attack" and others. For example, in the 11th Guards Army of the Third Belorussian Front before the East Prussian Operation, each rifle regiment ahead of time assigned and trained an assault battalion, a pursuit detachment and a night fighting battalion. The assault battalion had antitank weapons, a battery of self-propelled guns or a battery of 122-mm cannons on mechanical traction, a combat engineer company, a platoon of manpack flamethrowers and a chemical troop platoon.

The assault battalion on the offensive could also be reinforced with a company of close support tanks and a battery of heavy self-propelled artillery guns.

The pursuit detachment was organized from one rifle battalion which was reinforced with antitank artillery figuring two guns per company, an artillery battalion, a battery of self-propelled guns, a combat engineer platoon, and a platoon of mounted or foot scouts. The detachment was supplied with motor transport and fuel.

The time for the training of the battalions was determined depending upon their purpose. Thus, the assault battalions spent 65 percent of the total time on exercises involving the preparations for the breach and only 35 percent on pursuit exercises. The pursuit detachments devoted a large portion of the time to the questions of pursuit and meeting engagement.(11) Along with tactical training, significant attention was paid to weapons training as well as organizing and maintaining cooperation. In addition to the usual planned combat training, certain armies organized and conducted specialist courses. For example, in the formations and units of the 8th Guards Army of the First Belorussian Front, 5-10-day courses were conducted for machine gunners, radio operators, combat engineers, snipers, drivers, antitank rifle teams and so forth.(12)

The tank units and the close support subunits took part together with the combined-arms armies in breaching the enemy prepared defenses.

In accord with the demands of the Order of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 235 of 16 October 1942, separate tank battalions, regiments and brigades were to be assigned for carrying out this task. The close support tanks, the order stated, have as their main task the destruction of enemy infantry. They should not get more than 200-400 m away from their infantry.(13)

The subjects for the combat training of personnel from the separate tank brigades, the separate tank regiments, and the self-propelled artillery regiments were determined by instructions from the front's commander of the armored and mechanized troops for the period of preparing for the operation. These set the time for developing combat teamwork in the crews, platoons, companies and battalions as well as the main tasks in training the personnel to break through a strongly fortified enemy defense. Great attention was paid to developing in the officer personnel the skills of organizing and maintaining cooperation with the infantry, artillery, engineer troops and aviation in the course of the breakthrough.

In training the troops for the breakthrough, of great importance was instruction for the engineer troops and the organizing of cooperation with them for the infantry and tanks. In breaching a prepared defense, densities were set within six-eight combat companies per kilometer of breakthrough front.(14) Each rifle battalion was reinforced by a combat engineer company or platoon.

During the combat training chief attention was given to organizing and maintaining cooperation between the infantry, tanks, artillery and engineer subunits in the course of the breakthrough.(15) This was achieved by working out the designated questions during exercises.

In the course of the training they worked on the questions of joint actions of the infantry and tanks with antitank weapons, and joint drills were conducted for the tank crews and a mounted party to combat German bazookas. In training the infantry, tank and artillery units and formations, much was done to instruct the commanders and staffs in organizing and maintaining cooperation, particularly with aviation. The signals for mutual identification of ground troops and aviation were studied and worked through.

There was interesting experience in the IX Guards Tank Corps before the Vistula-Oder Operation. In the aim of establishing closer cooperation with aviation, the corps conducted a conference for the tank troops and pilots and here proposals were made to improve this. After the conference brigade exercises were conducted using the equipment and involving the ground attack and fighter aviation. Here these proposals were actually applied and this subsequently had a positive effect on solving the designated questions in the course of the operation.(16)

In preparing the troops to breach a prepared enemy defense, enormous attention was given to party political work, the forms and methods of which were determined by the conditions of preparing for the operation as well as by the specific battle tasks. Widely employed were individual talks, assemblies, meetings, the showing of films, the presenting of decorations and commendatory letters and the publishing of information on heroic and decisive actions of the men in the army and corps newspapers.

Great work was done to strengthen the party and Komsomol organizations, chiefly the primary ones. This was conducted first of all in the party and Komsomol organizations of the combat subunits. Thus, in the 103d Tank Brigade of the 2d Guards Tank Army, after a meeting held on the eve of the Vistula-Oder Operation, 30 requests to join the party were submitted with around 60 in the 57th Motorized Rifle Brigade.(17) Party political work during the period of preparing the troops for a breakthrough was characterized by purposefulness, planning, flexibility and efficiency. It comprised an inseparable part of the entire system of combat and political training and troop indoctrination.

The experience of the Great Patriotic War shows that as a result of the careful and complete preparation of the formations, units and subunits for combat, losses in personnel and equipment were significantly reduced and the pace of breaching the enemy defenses rose.

Footnotes

1. "Razvitiye taktiki Sovetskoy Armii v gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny 1941-1945 gg." [Development of Soviet Army Tactics During the Years of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1958, p 97.
2. "Voyennyy entsiklopedicheskiy slovar" [Military Encyclopedic Dictionary], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1983, p 596.
3. "Sbornik boyevykh dokumentov Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Collection of Combat Documents of the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, No 14, pp 3-5.
4. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 3409, inv. 1, file 1, sheet 200.
5. "Sbornik boyevykh dokumentov...", Moscow, Voenizdat, No 13, 1951, pp 49-50.
6. "Sbornik materialov po izucheniyu opyta voyny" [Collection of Materials to Study the War's Experience], Moscow, Voenizdat, No 20, 1945, p 12.
7. M.A. Gareyev, "Takticheskiye ucheniya i manerri" [Tactical Exercises and Maneuvers], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1977, p 157.
8. TsAMO, folio 3410, inv. 1, file 51, sheet 15.
9. Ibid., folio 3405, inv. 1, file 155, sheet 32.
10. "Sbornik boyevykh dokumentov...", No 13, pp 76-80.
11. "Sbornik materialov po izucheniyu...", No 20, p 13.
12. "Sbornik boyevykh dokumentov...", No 13, p 113.
13. "Stroitelstvo i boyevoye primeneniye sovetskikh tankovykh voysk v gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Organizational Development and Combat Employment of Soviet Tank Troops During Years of Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1979, p 100.
14. "Razvitiye taktiki Sovetskoy...", p 191.
15. TsAMO, folio 217, inv. 1221, file 3887, sheet 277.
16. Ibid., folio 3409, inv. 1, file 1, sheet 175.
17. Ibid., folio 307, inv. 4118, file 411, sheet 131.

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Organization of Offensive by Regimental Commander

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[Article by Maj Gen (Ret) A.Ya. Nechayev: "The Organization of an Offensive by a Regimental Commander"]

[Text] An analysis of a number of offensive battles of the Great Patriotic War indicates that, in being approximately under equal conditions, some commanders achieved victories while other suffered defeat. This was explained by many factors, including the ability of the commander to organize combat. "...Any engagement," wrote V.I. Lenin, "includes the abstract possibility of defeat, and there is no other means to reduce this possibility except the organized preparation of the engagement."(1)

The organization of combat is a complex and labor-intensive process. During the years of the war, the commanders did not always have sufficiently complete and reliable data on the enemy, its forces and plans. In widely employing disinformation, the enemy endeavored to depict the faults as the true and vice versa. Moreover, there were no analogs of combat, for each new situation was not like the previous one. "The war," commented MSU I.S. Konev, "involved such an amount of unforeseen circumstances and such a constant necessity of making corrections and seeking out new solutions that, no matter how you planned, you could not schedule everything, you could not give all the orders and could not indicate everything ahead of time on each question."(2)

The art of organizing offensive combat followed a complex path of development. The first period of the war was the most difficult. The lack of experience in organizing combat often led to errors. Often there was little time assigned to prepare for an offensive. As a result, it was not possible to organize combat completely. Due to the abruptly changing situation and the lack of the necessary communications, the unit and subunit commanders often received their battle tasks very late. In the Directive of Hq SHC issued in September 1941, it states: "...In a number of instances the failure of our offensive battles and operations has been the direct consequence of their poor organization and preparation...."(3)

The Red Army Infantry Field Manual published at the end of 1942 helped largely in improving the organization of combat. The manual stated that the basis of control is the following: a correct understanding of the received task; careful evaluation of the situation; a firm, definite decision and the steadfast carrying of it out; the issuing of brief, simple and clear orders (instructions); the setting of additional tasks considering the situation. The demands of the manual introduced the essential clarity into the work of the formation, unit and subunit commanders.

The organization of combat is a concrete concept. It includes the taking of the decision, the setting of tasks for the troops, the planning of combat, the organizing of cooperation, control and support.(4) The commander was the main organizer of combat in a regiment. He took the decision, he set the combat tasks, he organized cooperation, he coordinated the actions of his troops with the actions of adjacent units, he directed the work of the staff and chiefs of services and controlled the forces in the course of combat. The staff played a leading role in supporting the organization of combat. In providing practical aid to the commander, the staff took all measures to ensure all-round preparation for combined-arms combat and continuous control in the course of carrying out the combat tasks.

An offensive against a defending enemy was organized in a varying combat situation. For this reason the procedure and the scope of the work for the commanders and staffs in organizing the offensive varied and depended upon the battle task, the availability of time and the position of the units by the start of the offensive, the nature of enemy actions and other conditions. The given article has attempted, using the examples of several battles, to review only those characteristic features of them which primarily ensured a victory.

Success of combat depended primarily upon the taking of a sound decision. The way to this included both logic of argument, intuitive aspects, an analysis of already conducted battles and the carrying out of various calculations. The decision was based on two interrelated and interdependent creative processes: a study of the battle task and an assessment of the situation.

In studying the received task, the regiment's commander endeavored to understand the over-all concept of the immediate superior (what he wants to achieve in combat) and determine the place of his unit in the task to be carried out by the division, namely: in what echelon, on what axis and with what task the regiment will operate, and what units or subunits have been attached to it or support it. With such an approach the regiment's commander gets an over-all outline for the future decision which subsequently assumes a specific form.

After studying the tasks, the regiment's commander determined what measures must be carried out immediately for organizing combat and calculated the time needed for this by subordinate commanders as well as for himself. Those commanders who "ate up" the time of subordinates ended up in a bad situation. For example, the Commander of the 1291st Rifle Regiment of the 110th Rifle Division, Capt S.D. Lobachev, in organizing the offensive against Yelagino (near Naro-Fominsk) in December 1941, had several hours at his disposal. He spent a large portion of the time taking a decision and giving the tasks to the subunits. As a result, the subordinate commanders had a shortened time for organizing the offensive and this told negatively on the course and outcome of the offensive.(5)

On the basis of studying the task and calculating the time, the regiment's commander issued the necessary orders, that is, immediately put subordinate commanders to work. In assessing the situation, the regiment's commander endeavored to go into all its details. Particularly urgent was the question of a correct assessment of the opposing enemy. "The most dangerous thing in a war," said Army Gen P.I. Batov, "is to assume that the enemy is stupider than you."(6)

In the course of studying the situation (the enemy, his own troops, adjacent units, the terrain, weather, season and time of day), the regiment's commander established to what degree it favored or impeded the carrying out of the set task and what measures had to be carried out to eliminate the factors impeding the carrying out of the task or reducing their negative influence.

Reconnaissance was of important significance in the process of taking a sound decision. The unsuccessful actions of the formations and units in the first period of the war were largely determined by precisely little attention paid to it. The Directive of Hq SHC issued in September 1941 stated that "decisions are being taken from the map, without preliminary reconnaissance of the enemy and the field."(7) This directive prohibited the taking of a decision for an offensive by commanders of divisions, regiments and battalions without a personal and carefully organized reconnaissance.

In the subsequent years of the war, the decision was taken, as a rule, in the field with a final adjustment of it in reconnaissance. Thus, the Commander of the 22d Guards Rifle Regiment of the 9th Guards Rifle Division, Guards Maj M.M. Kolchinskiy, in organizing the breakthrough of the enemy defenses in March 1944 at Vitebsk, out of the 5 days which he had to organize combat, spent 3 working with the subunit commanders directly in the field. Each enemy weapons emplacement was studied and covert approaches to the enemy defenses were ascertained. This determined the success of the battle.(8) In analyzing the preparations for the 1944 Belorussian Operation, MSU K.K. Rokossovskiy recalled: "The compiling of the plan was preceded by extensive work in the field and particularly on the forward edge. We literally had to fall on our stomach."(9)

The regiment's commander usually involved in the reconnaissance the commanders of the battalions, the attached and supported units and subunits, the chiefs of the combat arms, the special troops and services and the chief of staff (staff officers). The regiment's staff, on the basis of the instructions from the regiment's commander, worked out a reconnaissance plan which set: its goal and main tasks; the time of execution; participants; the number and make-up of the reconnaissance groups, their chiefs and tasks; routes and means of movement; work halts, the main questions to be decided at each halt and the time assigned for this; which of the commanders of the subordinate and attached (supporting) units (subunits) and adjacent units should be met, at what points

and at what time. The regiment's commander usually conducted reconnaissance at several points. Initially, he filled in its participants in the field, indicated the markers, familiarized the officers with the regiment's battle task and after this began to study the given questions.

The covertness of reconnaissance depended upon the choice of well concealed work points; upon covert movement to them; upon forms of dress; measures to protect and safekeep documents; the preparation of the work points and the participants in the reconnaissance. The violating of the rules of secrecy led to undesirable consequences. For example, in December 1942, prior to the start of an offensive to the southeast of Rzhev, tank formations moved up to the forming-up place. Their commanders during the day and in the sight of the enemy began conducting reconnaissance. They were all dressed in new white shortcoats which had not been issued to the officers of the subunits located on this sector. It was not hard for the enemy to determine that new units had arrived and probably an offensive was being prepared. They undertook countermeasures and as a result our troops did not succeed in achieving the desired success.

Another example is more instructive. Reconnaissance was excellently conducted by the 176th Rifle Regiment of Lt Col S.F. Semenov (46th Rifle Division) in preparing an offensive on the Narew bridgehead in January 1945 in the course of the East Prussian Operation. On 26 December 1944, having received a battle task from the divisional commander, the regiment's commander studied it and assessed the situation. On 7 January, he conducted reconnaissance with the commanders of the battalions, the tank and artillery units, and during this he drew particular attention to ascertaining the precise configuration of the enemy's forward defensive edge, the obstacle and fire plan, weak points, intervals and flanks. After completing it, the regiment's commander took a decision and in the field set the battle tasks.

On 8 and 9 January, the battalion commanders in their sectors conducted reconnaissance calling upon the company and battery commanders. Here the officers clarified the procedure for changing and taking up the forming-up place for the offensive by the infantry and the tanks as well as the taking up of firing positions by the artillery. At the same time, the subunit commanders became acquainted with the terrain and the nature of the enemy's defensive structures. All of this ensured the taking of a sound decision and high results from the offensive battle.

Issuing battle tasks to executors also comprised an important part in organizing battle. Under the conditions of direct contact with the enemy, the commanders most often personally gave battle tasks to executors on the map and clarified them in the field. For this the subordinate commanders were summoned to the regiment's staff or to a designated point in the field or the commander himself went to the subunits.

Of important significance was the clarity with which the tasks were set, guaranteeing against any misunderstanding. For example, here is how the battalion commander in the field received his task from the commander of the 22d Guards Rifle Regiment of the 9th Guards Rifle Division, Guards Maj M.M. Kolchinskiy, in March 1944 in breaching the enemy defenses at Velikiye Luki:

"The 1st Rifle Battalion with a platoon of a regimental battery of 76-mm cannons, two platoons of an antitank battery with 45-mm cannons, a battery from the 2d Separate Guards Antitank Battalion, a combat engineer platoon from the 3d Separate Guards Combat Engineer Battalion is to breach the enemy defenses in the boundaries of the designated zone and destroy the enemy in the area of the forests to the east of the elevation with a marker 162.7, the nameless hill 500 m to the south of the elevation with the marker 162.7; subsequently it is to advance in the direction of the individual houses and capture Pavlovo. The forming-up place for the offensive—the nameless elevation 500 m to the west of Datlya—is to be occupied by 0400 hours on 7 March 1944. The battalion is to be supported by a regimental artillery group consisting of the 376th Howitzer Artillery Regiment and the 560th Mortar Regiment."(10)

The battle order issued by the regiment's commander orally was then, as a rule, drawn up in writing by the staff. The regiment's staff ensured the prompt arrival of the summoned individuals at the commander's, it supplied them with maps of the zone of the forthcoming advance and provided background information on the situation and on the general task received by the regiment.

When the commander travels directly to the subunits for setting the tasks on the spot, the staff organized this trip, and notified subordinates ahead of time on the commander's arrival time and provided security during the journey. The deputy chief of staff (a staff officer) usually went with the commander and he plotted on a map and wrote down all the instructions issued to one or another battalion commander and checked the text of the note of the battalion commander (chief of staff) who had been given the battle task with his own notes.

The chief condition for achieving success in battle was precisely organized **cooperation**. Due to the absence of combat experience during the first period of the war this was poorly organized. This can be seen from the offensive battles at Moscow, Tikhvin and Rostov. Here artillery and mortar fire was poorly coordinated with infantry and tank actions. Often the infantry did not know the tasks of the artillery and the artillery troops did not know where the infantry was at a given moment. As a result, the troops suffered unjustified losses and did not carry out their tasks.

The Chief of the General Staff, Col Gen A.M. Vasilevskiy (October 1942), pointed out: "...Cooperation prior to an offensive on all levels must be carefully worked out

directly in the field...and the commanders of the rifle battalions must have at least 3 daylight hours for organizing cooperation in the field with the attached and supporting subunits."(12)

With the gaining of combat experience, the organization of cooperation improved significantly and began to be marked by purposefulness and clarity. In the regiment this was organized by tasks, lines and time. Here the actions were coordinated as follows: between elements of the battle formation (first echelon with the second echelon, the artillery antitank reserve, the regimental artillery group and so forth); between one's own subunits and adjacent units; within the rifle (tank) battalions, particularly between the infantry and artillery, tanks and combat engineers. The basis for organizing cooperation in a regiment was the decision of the commander who in setting the battle tasks for the subordinates determined who would do what. But this was not sufficient. In the field it was also essential to determine and indicate how all the forces participating in the offensive should act and coordinate the actions of the subunits in such a way that the capabilities of each of them were fully utilized.

High effectiveness of cooperation was achieved when this was organized not only in the field but also on a specially prepared mock-up. The playing through of the forthcoming actions was carried out with the command personnel of all the cooperating units and subunits. The exercises were led personally by the commander who was to conduct the battle. The benefit from these exercises has been described by Army Gen P.I. Batov in his memoirs. "The idea of combat," he wrote, "as embodied in the decision of the commander should be made known to all, the infantrymen, the artillery troops, tank troops, pilots and combat engineers. But even a clearly written diagram of battle still does not have a soul. It does not have any sensation of the dynamics of combat, including the dynamics of cooperation among the formations, units and combat arms. The playing through of the offensive on a mock-up in a way makes up for this lack. Let us assemble around a mock-up and here each person clearly sees the content of the general operational task for the army troops to the entire depth of the operation as well as the particular tactical tasks of a formation in the over-all operational configuration of the forces in the breakthrough."(13)

Under favorable conditions, the forthcoming offensive was also played through with the troops. For example, the directive of the military council of the transcaucasian front of 18 January 1943 stated: "In the separate tank battalions and regiments all tactical exercises are to be carried out without fail with the infantry and the anti-tank artillery regiments; in the tank brigades, in addition, with the constant taking to the field by the motorized rifle battalion and the antitank battery."(14)

A superficial approach to organizing cooperation led to undesirable results. There was a particularly negative effect from the desire of certain combined-arms commanders to carry out the task of offensive combat using tanks.

In Order No. 445, the People's Commissar of Defense explained: "It must be realized that the enemy cannot be defeated by tanks alone without a correct organization of their cooperation with the other combat arms.... The tank units...without cooperation with the aviation, artillery, infantry and combat engineers lose many tanks in minefields and in areas of an organized enemy antitank defense, without achieving proper success."

...In Order No. 325, the People's Commissar of Defense defined: "The tanks, in operating together with the infantry, have as their main task the destruction of the enemy infantry and should not get more than 200-400 m away from their infantry."

"The infantry for supporting tank operations should destroy enemy antitank weapons by all the might of their own fire as well as the fire of the support weapons...they must decisively advance behind the tanks on the assault, they must quickly reinforce the lines captured by them...and assist in the evacuation of damaged tanks from the battlefield."

"The artillery up to the time the tanks go into the assault should destroy the enemy defensive antitank weapons. During the period of the assault on the forward edge and the fighting in the deep enemy defenses, upon the signals of the tank commanders they are to neutralize the weapons impeding the advance of the tanks...."

"With the appearance of enemy tanks on the battlefield, the artillery conducts the main fight against them. The tanks combat enemy tanks only in the event of a clear superiority in forces and an advantageous position."

"Our aviation fires on the enemy antitank defenses, it prevents the approach of enemy tanks to the battlefield, it covers the battle formations of the tank units against enemy air actions, and supports the combat of the tank units by constant and uninterrupted air reconnaissance."(15)

A major role in organizing cooperation was played by the staff. In the 1942 Red Army regulation for staff field service it was emphasized that "the staff which cannot maintain or restore cooperation destroyed in the course of battle cannot be considered a viable headquarters body." The work of a staff to support the organization of cooperation started after the commander had announced his decision. This, however, did not mean that the staff was not concerned with the questions of coordinating combat prior to the taking of the decision by the commander. During the time of studying the task and assessing the situation, it prepared for the commander data and proposals which ensured a correct and most effective employment of the forces; in the course of reconnaissance the staff officers at the request of the commander reported questions which required clarification and this ensured their most complete resolution. On the basis of the commander's decision and his instructions on organizing cooperation, the staff determined the

methods of communication between the units and subunits, the time for taking up the forming-up place for the offensive by each subunit and clarified the nature of the work related to the engineer preparation of this area; it worked out and clarified the signals for coordination, identification, warning and designation of the troops, it outlined the routes of advance for the second echelon and the reserves and also carried out other tasks.

The regiment commanders paid particular attention to **organizing control posts, to selecting their location and establishing the move procedures.** In a rifle regiment several simultaneously operating control posts were established: the observation post, the command post and the rear control group.

The regiment commanders endeavored to pick their observation posts as close as possible to the first echelon subunits in order to see the battlefield. "The regiment commander," wrote Army Gen S.M. Shtemenko, "almost always succeeds in this completely."(16) Frequently, the location of a regiment's observation post was indicated by the division commander. The regiment commander took up the observation post usually prior to the start of the artillery softening up; his immediate assistants were near him. Thus, with the commander of the 176th Rifle Regiment, Lt Col S.F. Semenov, in the offensive from the Narew bridgehead in January 1945, at the observation post were the deputy chief of staff of the regiment, the chief of intelligence, the signals chief, the artillery chief, the commander of the regimental artillery group, the chief of the engineer service and the commander of the cooperating tank regiment. The observation post of the regiment's commander was linked by telephone lines with the observation post of the divisional commander, with the regiment's staff and with the subordinate commanders. Radio communications were ready to go, but only with the start of the offensive was permission given for it to be used.(17)

The observation posts of the commanders of supporting subunits were set up next to the observation posts of the commanders of the supported subunits so that they would be in personal contact. "...We," recalled Army Gen P.I. Batov, "brought together the artillery, tank and infantry commanders, working for combat friendship, so that the comrades understood one another almost intuitively.... As a result, the artillery observation posts were located in the infantry battle formations: a battery commander was with the company commander and a battalion commander with a battery commander...."(18)

A command post was organized in the position of the regiment's second echelon at a point from where control and continuously operating communications were provided with the subordinate and cooperating subunits. Here were located: the regiment's commander (if it was not necessary for him to travel to the observation post), his deputies, the regiment's staff and the chiefs of the services (upon special instructions from the commander).

The personnel of the regiment's headquarters in charge of the questions of supply, accounting and manning comprised the rear control group and were in shelters in the area of the regiment's rear subunits. The regiment's deputy commander for supply was the chief of this group.

The distance between control posts was determined by the specific situation and by the nature of the battle task. For subunits this was from several-score to several hundred meters; for units it was 1-2 km.

The greatest closeness of control posts was noted in the fighting in Berlin. The subunit commanders were in the battle formations. The regiment commanders with their staffs were 200-300 m from the forward subunits and units(19) while the divisional command posts were 500-1,000 m. This provided an opportunity for the officers themselves to see the battle formations of the subunits and units and continuously control them in battle.

The moving of the control posts in the course of an offensive was planned successively in terms of tasks and time, but in such a manner as not to allow them to become distant from the subunits and not to disrupt contact both with subordinate and superior staffs.

In the offensive battles during the first period of the war, the platoon, company and battalion commanders were most often in front of their battle formations. This underestimated the role of the commander as an organizer of battle and expressed a miscomprehension that the commander is the central figure in the battle formations. Protecting the commander is a guarantee of success in battle and, conversely, the loss of a commander reduces the capabilities of the subunit.

The Red Army Infantry Field Manual (1942) clearly defined the place of the commander in the battle formation and recommended that the squad commander be directly in the extended line of his squad; platoon, company and battalion commanders were to be behind the battle formations of their subunits, at a place from whence they could observe the course of the fighting of both their own subunit as well as adjacent units, see their own battle formation and observe the enemy. The manual prescribed that only in exceptional instances of a combat situation should subunit (platoon, company, battalion) commanders be permitted to lead their subunits personally into battle.

Combat support was organized in the aim of giving the subunits an opportunity to enter battle promptly and in an organized manner and protect them against an enemy surprise attack. This included: reconnaissance, security, air defense, camouflage and support for the boundaries and flanks. The regiment's commander in his decision defined the tasks for combat support, set these tasks and provided the necessary forces to carry them out. The regiment's staff, on the basis of the decision and instructions of the commander and the superior staff, as well as

considering the situation, organized combat support. In working out the combat support measures, the following were considered: the nature of the regiment's forthcoming actions according to the tasks and sectors; the nature of expected enemy actions; measures carried out for combat support by the forces of the senior chief and adjacent units. Also taken into account was the composition and state of the forces assigned for combat security, the weather conditions and terrain features.

The Great Patriotic War was a most important stage in the development of Soviet military generally and the tactics of combined-arms combat, in particular. A study and analysis of this experience makes it possible for the officers to understand more profoundly the essence of organizing modern offensive combat, the demands placed and the ways for resolving this complex problem.

Footnotes

1. V.I. Lenin, PSS [Complete Collected Works], Vol 6, p 137.
2. I.S. Konev, "Sorok pyatyy" [Forty-Five], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1966, p 46.
3. "Sbornik boyevykh dokumentov Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Collection of Combat Documents of the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, No 5, 1947, p 6.
4. "Voyennyy entsiklopedicheskiy slovar" [Military Encyclopedic Dictionary], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1983, p 519.
5. "Taktika v voyevykh primerakh: Polk" [Tactics in Battle Examples: The Regiment], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1974, p 52.
6. P.I. Batov, "V pokhodakh i boyakh" [In Campaigns and Battles], Moscow, Izd-vo DOSAAF SSSR, 1984, p 180.
7. "Sbornik boyevykh dokumentov...", No 5, p 6.
8. "Taktika v boyevykh primerakh: Polk," pp 53, 54.
9. K.K. Rokossovskiy, "Soldatskiy dolg" [A Soldier's Duty], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1985, p 250.
10. "Boyevyye deystviya strelkovogo polka: Sbornik boyevykh primerov" [Combat Actions of a Rifle Regiment: A Collection of Combat Examples], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1958, pp 52-53.
11. TsAMO, folio 343, inv. 1, file 21, sheet 34.
12. "Taktika v boyevykh primerakh: Polk," pp 67, 68.
13. P.I. Batov, op. cit., p 171.

14. "Sbornik boyevykh dokumentov...", No 21, 1954, p 67.
15. Ibid., p 63.
16. S.M. Shtemenko, "Generalnyy shtab v gody voyny" [The General Staff in the War Years], Moscow, Voenizdat, Book 2, 1973, p 469.
17. "Taktika v boyevykh primerakh: Polk," p 77.
18. P.I. Batov, op. cit., p 170.
19. "Operatsii Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne" [Operations of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol IV, 1959, p 372.

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**Certain Features of Party Work in Armored
Troops in Great Patriotic War**
18010027f Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 9, Sep 87 (signed to press
21 Aug 87) pp 42-47

[Article, published under the heading "Party Political Work" by Col N.A. Maltsev, doctor of historical sciences: "Certain Particular Features of Party Work in the Armored Troops During the Years of the Great Patriotic War"; during the period described in the given article, the author was a driver and commander of a T-34 tank in the 56th Guards Tank Brigade of the VII Guards Tank Corps of the 3d Guards Tank Army]

[Text] The skillful organization and execution of party political work was one of the most important conditions for the armored troops to successfully carry out the tasks confronting them during the years of the Great Patriotic War. As everywhere in the troops, this work was based upon the decisions of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee, the Soviet government, the State Defense Committee [GKO], the orders and directives of Hq SHC and the RKKA [Worker-Peasant Red Army] Main Political Directorate. At the same time, the content, many forms and methods of these activities had definite features brought about primarily by the high mobility and great fire power of the armored troops which were employed in all types of combat and were particularly widely employed in offensive operations for achieving decisive goals in combating a strong and technically equipped enemy.

Prior to the organizing of tank armies in the Soviet Armed Forces, the direct organizers of party political work in the tank divisions, brigades and regiments were the political bodies, the military commissars and the party organizations. With the constituting of the first tank field forces, this work was headed by the military

councils (from May—July 1942) and by political sections (from September 1942) of the armies, political sections of corps and brigades and party organizations of the units and subunits. All the forces and means for ideological and political effect were employed to explain to the men the goals and tasks of the war, the sources of the might and invincibility of the Soviet people and their army, the unmasking of the aggressive plans of Nazi Germany, and the indoctrinating of burning hate against the occupiers. Already on 24 June 1941, in the Directive of the Soviet Army Main Directorate for Political Propaganda there was an appeal to the personnel of the armored troops: "Tankmen! A stronger blow against the enemy tanks. Together with the infantry, artillery and aviation, beat and defeat the enemy!"(1)

The strengthening of the party influence in the armored troops was greatly aided by the transforming of the political propaganda sections of the tank and motorized divisions and corps into political sections as carried out under the Ukase of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet of 16 July 1941 as well as the introduction of military commissars into the tank companies, battalions, regiments, divisions and corps.(2)

The party showed unceasing concern for strengthening the party organizations of the tank units and formations. On 10 August 1941, the chief of the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army issued the directive "On Strengthening the Party and Komsomol Stratum in the Tank Units." This obliged the military councils and political directorates of the districts to point out specialists who had previously served in the tank troops among the political fighters being called up.(3) By the end of 1941, around 30,000 communists and Komsomol members had been sent into the operational army to fill out the tank units.(4)

Due to the execution by the commanders, political bodies and party organizations of the decrees of the VKP(b) Central Committee of 19 August and 9 December 1941 on procedures for admitting to the party Soviet soldiers who had particularly distinguished themselves in fighting and the instructions of the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army, even during the first period of the war communists and Komsomol members in the tank subunits comprised from 50 to 70 percent of the total number of all personnel.(5) The work done ensured a constant growth of ideological and political influence on the personnel of the armored troops.

An example of this is the activities of the commanders, political workers and party organizations in the X Tank Corps which was fighting on the approaches to Sukhinchin in July-August 1942 (commander, Maj Gen Tank Trps V.G. Burkov, deputy corps commander for political affairs and chief of the political section, Brig Commissar I.P. Latyshev and from 29 July 1942, Brig Commissar I.A. Gavrilov). The political sections of the corps

and the brigades planned party political work for the preparatory period to repel the enemy counteroffensive, during the fighting and after its end.

Basic attention was paid to explaining the requirements of the documents of the party and government, the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army and the military councils of the Western Front and 16th Army. A great deal was done to inform the tank troops of the Order of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 227 of 28 July 1942 which with maximum truthfulness disclosed the greatness of the danger hanging over the country. The communists and Komsomol members discussed the specific tasks stemming from the order at party and Komsomol meetings conducted on 2-6 August in all brigades.

The units and subunits held seminars for agitators, instructional exercises with the party-Komsomol aktiv as well as rallies of the tank crews where they demonstrated the combat capabilities of the KV and T-34 tanks and organized practice firing at the most vulnerable parts of the enemy vehicles. Meetings of veterans with young tank troops brought a great deal of benefit and these were organized upon the initiative of the party organizations.

The party political work which was diverse in content and forms had a positive effect upon the combat activities of the corps. Regardless of the exceptionally difficult conditions, it continued to stubbornly hold the occupied positions to the southwest of Sukhinichi. And although the Nazis succeeded in cutting off certain units from the main forces, the surrounded troops did not flinch. Here the decisive role was played by the personal examples of the commanders, political workers and communists. When on 14 August, the Nazis broke through to the command post of the 183d Tank Brigade, the unit's military commissar, Btl Commissar F.F. Malinin, himself led the men of the staff security into battle and the enemy was pushed back. The authority of the communists and Komsomol members grew constantly. During the period of the fighting some 221 persons were admitted to the party and 195 to the Komsomol.(6)

During the second period of the war the commanders, political bodies and party organizations of the armored troops gave primary significance to indoctrinating high offensive drive in the personnel. Here they were guided by the demand of the Communist Party and the Soviet government for the Soviet troops, that is, to intensify the blows against the Nazi invaders, to decisively pursue the retreating enemy, and prevent it from digging in on defensive lines, to surround and destroy the enemy and liberate all the Soviet land from the occupiers.

The uniqueness of the combat situation was also felt on the forms and methods of party political work. In the fighting, during the most intense moments, there was no room for verbosity. Brief, inspiring appeals such as "For the Motherland!" "For the Party!" "Death to the Nazi Invaders!" "There Is the Dnieper!" "Forward to Kiev!"

and others urged the men to carry out a feat. These were passed orally from crew to crew, with the aid of leaflets, visual agitation and inscriptions on the tank armor.

Party political work was actively carried out in the concentration areas, in the assembly and forming-up positions, in the course of the fighting, at fueling stations and also the assembly after battle. Due to this the men developed a confidence in their forces and aggressiveness on the offensive was ensured. It indoctrinated steadfastness, courage and valor in operating away from the main forces and in the enemy rear.

The tank subunits were the center of party political work. The successful combat of the unit, formation and the army as a whole depended upon their training and ability to conduct the offensive. The political bodies and commanders placed the party and Komsomol forces in such a manner that each crew had communists and Komsomol members. Where there were two or three party members, they assigned group organizers and agitators for the crews and with two or three Komsomol members there were group Komsomol organizers.

The particular features of party political work in the armored troops during the Kursk Battle were largely determined by the fact that both sides employed a large amount of tanks and SAU. Under the conditions of the intentional, brief defense, the command of the fronts and the tank armies had to quickly ready the troops for decisive combat. In line with this, attention was drawn to strengthening party influence on the men. The Military Council of the Voronezh Front in May 1943 pointed out: "The enemy is preparing to launch a new thrust. For us each day is precious.... We must immediately raise political work to a higher level."(7)

An important task for party political work during this period was the indoctrinating of the personnel with confidence in our weapons and combat equipment. For this purpose, the commanders and experienced soldiers who had repelled Nazi tank attacks spoke with the men. In the corps and brigades meetings were held for the party aktiv and in the units and subunits, party and Komsomol meetings with the agenda "The Tasks of the Communists (Komsomol Members) in preparing the personnel, combat equipment and weapons for the forthcoming fighting." The Military Council of the 3d Guards Tank Army turned to the men with the appeal: "Not a step back! Bleed white, throw back and defeat the enemy!"(8) A leaflet issued by the political section of the 1st Tank Army stated: "The perfidious enemy has gone over to the offensive.... Do not let the enemy pass! This is the order of the motherland! Not a step back!"(9)

Each day of fighting provided numerous examples of heroism and self-sacrifice both on the part of individual tankmen as well as entire subunits and units. During those days courage, valor and resourcefulness were shown by the tank battalion commander of the 106th Tank Brigade of the XII Tank Corps, Communist N.Z.

Bratsyuk. His tank was one of the first to destroy two Tigers at the foot of a hill near the village of Subbotinskoye. However, the vehicle of the battalion commander caught fire. In flames, it moved against an enemy pillbox and crushed it. For courage, valor and military skill shown, Maj N.Z. Bratsyuk was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.(10)

In order to raise the spirit of the men even higher, the commanders and political bodies immediately informed them of new facts of heroism. Each feat carried out by the soldiers, sergeants and officers was announced to all the personnel through the agitators as well as by leaflets and combat leaflets. For example, the army newspaper *Na Razgrom Vraga* on 12 July contained an article "Our Tank Is Stronger and Better Than the German." In it a tank commander described a battle against a Tiger which caught fire and blew up from direct hits of several rounds.(11)

The political bodies, the party and Komsomol organizations in working to mobilize the personnel to successfully carry out the battle tasks, widely employed hand-written express leaflets as the most accessible flexible and immediate form for popularizing the battle successes of the subunits and the combat feats of the tankmen. Blanks with headings "Our Heroes," "Today the Following Have Excelled in Battle," and "Follow the Example of the Hero" were made up ahead of time. The leaflets were handed from tank to tank. The following example shows the effectiveness of such a form of agitation. In the fighting for Svyatoshino, Guards Sr Sgt I.V. Antonov from the 56th Guards Tank Brigade distinguished himself. His tank was the first to break into the population point. The Nazis attacked the vehicle and wounded the commander. Disregarding the pain, Komsomol member Antonov under continuous fire corrected the damage and re-entered battle. Although soon thereafter his cannon became stuck, Antonov continued to crush the enemy infantry with the tracks of his tank and then destroyed two six-barrel mortars along with their crews. An enemy shell ended the life of the courageous soldier. Posthumously he was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.(12) The company party organizer, Lt S.F. Makeyev, wrote out a leaflet. It stated: "Today, having shown courage and heroism, Komsomol member Ivan Antonov died the death of the brave. He has been put up for the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

"Tank guardsmen! Let us revenge the death of our fellow servicemen. Hit the Nazi skunks like our heroes did. Victory is near but the enemy is still strong. Treble our offensive drive. Berlin lies ahead!" The leaflet was duplicated on a typewriter, repeatedly copied by hand and passed about in the tank crews.(13) Its mobilizing significance was enormous.

By the orders of the commanders of tank formations, in the aims of popularizing the crews which had particularly distinguished themselves in the fighting, individual

tanks were given the names of Suvorov, Kutuzov, Chapayev, Frunze, as well as the names of heroes of the unit who had perished in the fighting for the motherland. On the occasion of these events meetings were conducted in the subunits and, if the situation permitted, also in the units. Thus, in July 1944, in the fighting for Daugavpils, an immortal feat was committed by a crew from the V Tank Corps headed by the communist, Lt N. Tambovtsev. Having broken into the enemy position, using its guns and tracks the tank destroyed 2 antitank guns and up to 30 Nazis. Then the tank was hit and it caught fire. The driver, upon orders of the commander, headed the flaming vehicle toward an enemy gun and crushed it. In this fighting, Communist N. Tambovtsev and his comrades perished but their feat helped the advancing units in defeating the enemy. The corps commander, Gen M.G. Sakhno, in commemoration of the lost crew, ordered the name "Nikolay Tambovtsev" awarded to the tank of Sr Lt V. Muzhavlev. At a meeting the tankmen assured the command that they would be as intrepid as their combat friend had been.(14)

During the third period of the war, the particular features of party political work were determined by the scope, breadth and complexity of the battle tasks confronting the Soviet Armed Forces as a whole and the tank troops in particular. In the course of preparing for the battles and operations, all forms and means of political effect on the personnel were directed at ensuring a high rate of advance. Special attention was paid to the quality of combat training. Certain officers, under the effect of the victories won, had begun to show indifference and complacency and an inclination to exaggerate their own capabilities.

The military councils and the political bodies of the tank armies demanded an improvement in the combat and political training of the officer personnel. Before each operation, the tank armies, corps and brigades conducted exercises with the officers on mastering combat experience. For example, the commanders and political workers of the 5th Tank Army took every measure so that the subunit commanders in the course of the exercises learned to attack correctly and rapidly, to fight deep in the enemy defenses, to seal off its strongpoints, destroy tanks, cut them off from the infantry, and covertly and rapidly execute a maneuver.(15) During the preparations for the Berlin Operation, the military council of the 3d Guards Tank Army issued an order to have the officer personnel study the experience of the street fighting in Stalingrad.(16) The army, corps and brigade political sections organized speeches by participants in the fighting on the Volga to the officers.(17) They duplicated the article from the newspaper *Krasnaya Zvezda* of 18 October 1942 entitled "The University of City Fighting" about the combat actions of the 62d Army in Stalingrad and all the army personnel was acquainted with this.(18) Other political bodies also worked for a thorough study of the experience of previous fighting.

Of great importance was the work of the commanders, the political workers and party organizations to mobilize the tank troops to successfully cross water obstacles. A particular feature of this was that the crossing of rivers, including such large ones as the Vistula, Oder and Danube, was carried out by our mobile troops without a pause. Preparations to cross them were carried out usually in the process of pursuing the enemy, long before reaching the water barrier.

As the troops came closer to the rivers, the commanders and political workers intensified political work among the personnel. First of all, they explained to the soldiers and officers how important it was to quickly capture the opposite bank. They particularly emphasized the necessity of a rapid and covert reaching of the water obstacles. The troops were also warned of the inadmissibility of concentrating units and subunits at the crossings.

We should note the experience of party political work on supporting the crossing of the Oder by the 2d Guards Tank Army during the period of the Vistula-Oder Offensive Operation and the crossing of the Ipeľ and Hron Rivers by units of the 6th Guards Tank Army in the course of the Budapest Operation. As a rule, when they were 50-100 km away from the river, the commanders and political workers intensified the propagandizing of crossing experience. They told the personnel about this river and about all the possible difficulties.

The staffs and political sections of the formations sent their officers to the pontoon engineer units in order to help better ensure the readiness of the crossing equipment and the personnel for promptly erecting crossings.

The practice of assigning political workers to the crossings also proved effective. They, like the commandants of the crossings, were entrusted with the duty of helping in the precise and prompt fulfillment of the commander's crossing order by the subunits and units. Being, in essence, the deputy commandant for political affairs, they mobilized the personnel of the crossing to maintain proper order and discipline.

One of the main areas of party political work in the armored troops during the years of the war was the strengthening of military discipline and increasing organization and vigilance. The importance of this rose even further with the shifting of hostilities outside our motherland, to the territory of Nazi Germany. Thus, the Military Council of the 6th Tank Army demanded that the commanders and political bodies decisively improve indoctrination and take the necessary measures to strengthen troop discipline.⁽¹⁹⁾ The military councils of the 1st and 3d Guards Tank Armies adopted appeals to the officer personnel, the communists and Komsomol members: "Discipline—the Guarantee of Victory"⁽²⁰⁾ and "Carry Out Your Duty, as the Regulations and Military Oath Require."⁽²¹⁾ The editors of the army

newspapers ran mass editions of leaflets and instructions which set out the requirements of the military regulations and the military oath. All tank crews were supplied with them.

In carrying out the instructions of the VKP(b) Central Committee and the Directive of the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army of 19 July 1944⁽²²⁾, the military councils, commanders and political bodies carried out significant indoctrinational work with the tank troop personnel in order to prevent possible manifestations of vengeance to the German population by the servicemen. In particular, party and Komsomol meetings were held where they examined the state of military discipline and the measures to strengthen it. For example, the minutes of a Komsomol meeting of the 1st Tank Company of the 2d Tank Battalion from the 56th Guards Tank Brigade of 15 April 1945⁽²³⁾ stated: "Komsomol members! Forward against the enemy! But remember the words of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief: The Nazis will come and go but the German people will remain. We are soldiers who have liberated Europe from Naziism and we are internationalists!..."⁽²⁴⁾

An analysis of party political work in the armored troops during the years of the armed struggle of the Soviet people against Naziism shows that in each stage of the war it had its particular features and was marked by great scope, continuity, effectiveness and purposefulness. The creative employment of the experience of organizing and conducting it helps to increase the effectiveness of party political work under present-day conditions and helps indoctrinate the personnel in a spirit of ardent Soviet patriotism and socialist internationalism and to mobilize the men to successfully carry out the difficult tasks confronting them.

Footnotes

1. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 32, inv. 11318, file 9, sheet 177.
2. Ibid., folio 795436, file 4, sheet 23.
3. Ibid., sheet 3.
4. Ibid., folio 32, inv. 11289, file 264, sheets 73-74.
5. Ibid., inv. 11309, file 3, sheet 217.
6. I.M. Kravchenko and V.V. Burkov, "Desyatyy tankovyy Dneprovskiy" [The Tenth Dnieper Tank], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1986, pp 26-27.
7. TsAMO, folio 32, inv. 11309, file 21, sheet 217.
8. Ibid., folio 315, inv. 4440, file 172, sheet 31.
9. Ibid., folio 32, inv. 11309, file 6, sheet 289.

10. N.G. Nersesyan, "Kiyevsko-Berlinskiy. Boyevoy put 6-go gvardeyskogo tankovogo korpusa" [Kiev-Berlin. The Campaign Record of the VI Guards Tank Corps], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1974, pp 44, 193.

11. TsAMO, folio 32, inv. 440031, file 26, sheet 5.

12. "3-ya gvardeyskaya tankovaya" [3d Guards Tank], Moscow, 1982, pp 121-122.

13. TsAMO, folio 3152, inv. 1, file 17, sheet 53.

14. *Voyenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No 1, 1971, p 33.

15. "Stalingradskaya epopeya" [Stalingrad Epoch], Moscow, Nauka, 1968, p 447.

16. TsAMO, folio 315, inv. 4446, file 4, sheet 124.

17. Ibid., sheet 137.

18. Ibid., folio 32, inv. 11309, file 184, sheet 19.

19. Ibid., folio 30, inv. 23607, file 3, sheet 211.

20. Ibid., folio 299, inv. 48801, file 4, sheet 42.

21. Ibid., folio 315, inv. 4440, file 7, sheet 8.

22. "Partiyno-politicheskaya rabota v Sovetskikh Voozruzhennykh Silakh v gody Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Party-Political Work in the Soviet Armed Forces During the Years of the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968, p 426.

23. During this period Guards Sr Sgt N.A. Maltsev was the Komsomol organizer of the designated company.

24. TsAMO, folio 3152, inv. 1, file 44, sheet 81.

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Notes on Biography of G.K. Zhukov
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[Article, published under the heading "From Unpublished Manuscripts" by K.M. Simonov: "Notes on the Biography of G.K. Zhukov"; the article is a continuation. See: *Voyenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No 6, 7, 1987]

[Text] Part Two "Notes of Conversations"

1. During 1965-1966, I had several particularly long talks with Zhukov. To a significant degree their nature was determined by the range of those questions which I posed for Zhukov.

In line with the work I have mentioned on a film, it was important for me to know Zhukov's views on everything that happened in the first period of the war.

In line with my work on a novel dealing with the last period of the war, I was also interested in the nature of Headquarter's work and the view which Zhukov had developed concerning Stalin as the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of our army.

Finally, in Zhukov I saw, possibly, the most able representative of that generation of our military who, having so difficultly begun the war, honorably carried it on their shoulders. I had written and intended to write more about these individuals and I was deeply interested by the various periods of Zhukov's military activities and his views of the events in which he had been involved as well as the men with whom he had served.

As a result, rather extensive notes were obtained and certainly only I myself bear responsibility for their accuracy.

It seems to me that these notes gathered by me on the various subjects are not only of historical but also psychological interest. Behind Zhukov's answers stands his personality, there stands not only his attitude toward various events but also his manner of describing them and which also discloses character traits.

Certain places from these conversations have already been given by me in the first part of the "Notes," where this seemed essential to me. All the rest has been assembled here.

[Here begin statements by Zhukov himself]

We often speak, in particular in line with the prewar situation and the outbreak of the war, about the blame and responsibility of Stalin.

On the one hand, this is correct. But on the other, I feel that we must not reduce everything to him alone. That is wrong. As a witness and participant in the events of those times, I must say that other people shared responsibility along with Stalin, including those closest to him, Molotov, Malenkov and Kaganovich.

I will not speak about Beriia. He was an individual ready to do anything at all, wherever and however. Such individuals are essential precisely for this purpose. So the question of him is a special one, and in the given instance I will speak about others.

Let me add that a portion of the blame also rests on Voroshilov, although in 1940 he was removed from the post of people's commissar of defense but up to the very outbreak of the war remained the chairman of the Defense Committee. And a portion of the blame rests on us, the military. It lies on a whole number of other individuals in the party and state.

In participating numerous times in a discussion of a number of questions with Stalin in the presence of his closest associates, I had an opportunity to see disputes and altercations, to see stubbornness shown on certain questions particularly by Molotov. At times, things reached the point where Stalin raised his voice and even lost control while Molotov, smiling, got up from the table but kept his viewpoint.

Many of Stalin's proposals concerning the strengthening of defenses and the weaponry of the Army encountered resistance and argument. After this, commissions were set up in which there were disputes and certain questions were lost in these disputes. This was also a form of resistance.

It would be wrong to imagine that no one around Stalin never disputed him on state and economic questions. However, at that time, a majority of the persons surrounding Stalin supported him on those political views which he had developed before the war and primarily his certainty that if we did not allow ourselves to give any provocation or make any false step, then Hitler would not bring himself to destroy the pact and attack us.

Both Malenkov and Kaganovich on this question sided completely with Stalin. Molotov also supported this viewpoint particularly actively. Molotov was not only a strong-willed and stubborn individual who was hard to move if he had taken up some position. From my observations in addition to this, he at that time had a serious influence on Stalin, particularly on foreign policy questions where Stalin at that time, prior to the war, considered him competent. It was another question later when all the plans turned out to be incorrect and had collapsed and Stalin repeatedly in my presence blamed Molotov for this. Molotov was not always silent in response. Molotov after his trip to Berlin in November 1940 continued to assert that Hitler would not attack us. It must be considered that in Stalin's eyes, in this instance Molotov had the additional authority of a man who had been personally present in Berlin.

Molotov's authority was strengthened by the qualities of his character. He was a strong, principled man far from any personal considerations, extremely stubborn, extremely rigid, one who consciously followed Stalin and supported him in the cruelest actions, including in 1937-1938, proceeding from his own views. Out of conviction he followed Stalin while at that time Malenkov and Kaganovich did this for their careers.

The only one of those close to Stalin who in my memory and in my presence voiced a different viewpoint on the possibility of a German attack was Zhdanov. He inevitably spoke very harshly about the Germans and asserted that Hitler could be trusted about nothing.

How did Stalin develop his prewar misconceptions which cost us so dear? I feel that at the outset he was confident that he could rap Hitler around his little finger as a result of concluding the pact. But later on, all of this turned out quite the reverse.

However, it is indisputable that on both sides the pact was concluded with precisely this intention.

Stalin overestimated the degree to which Hitler would be tied down in the West, and felt that he would be occupied there and in the near future could not fight against us. Putting this at the basis of all his forecasts, Stalin, after the fall of France, clearly did not find it within his strength to reassess the situation.

The war in Finland demonstrated to Hitler the weak points of our army. But at the same time it showed this to Stalin. This was the result of 1937-1938, a most grievous result.

If one compares the training of our personnel prior to the events of those years, in 1936, and after these events, in 1939, it must be said that the level of troop combat training had declined very greatly. Bad enough that the army, starting from the regiments, was to a significant degree without leadership, it was further decimated by these events. There was a terrifying decline in discipline and things reached the point of absences without leave and desertion. Many commanders felt lost and unable to impose order.

When after the Finnish events I was summoned from Kalkhin-Gol and appointed commander of the Kiev Military District, Stalin, in talking with me, was very harsh about Voroshilov:

"He was boasting, he assured and confirmed that we would respond to the attack with a triple attack, everything was fine, everything was in order, everything ready, Comrade Stalin, but it turned out differently...."

I was still in command of the Kiev Military District when in December 1940, we conducted a major military game. In this game I was in command of the blues and played the Germans. Pavlov, the commander of the Western Military District, played for us, he commanded the reds, our Western Front. On the Southwestern Front, Shtern played up to him.

Having taken actual initial data and the strength of the enemy, the Germans, I, in commanding the blues, developed an operation precisely on those axes where later the Germans developed their operations. I launched my main thrusts where they launched theirs later. The groupings were organized approximately as they were later organized during the war. The configuration of our frontiers, the terrain and the situation—all of this suggested to me precisely those decisions which later were suggested to the Germans. The game lasted around 8 days. The leadership of the game artificially held up the

rate of advance of the blues and checked this. But the blues in 8 days had advanced to the Baranovichi area and, let me repeat, with an artificially slowed down rate of advance.

In January 1941, there was an analysis of this strategic game at the Main Military Council. In making the main report assigned to me, I decided to take up certain questions which were alarming for us. First of all, the question of the bad positioning of a system of new fortified areas along the new frontier. The configuration of the frontiers made this placement bad. It would have been much better to place them back approximately 100 km in depth. I realized that this viewpoint would cause dissatisfaction because the system of placing the fortified areas which I was criticizing had been approved by the Labor and Defense Council and ultimately by Stalin. Nevertheless, I was determined to do something. I should describe this.

Stalin listened to the report attentively and asked me and those present a number of questions. In particular, he asked why the blues were so strong and why in the initial data for our game such strong German forces had been given? He was answered that these forces corresponded to the capabilities of the Germans and were based upon a real estimate of all those forces which they could throw against us, having created great advantages on the axis of their main thrust. This also explained the decisive advance of the blues during the game.

Soon after this briefing I was appointed chief of the General Staff.

Prior to this I did not have experience in staff work and up to the start of the war, in my own mind, was not a sufficiently experienced and trained chief of the General Staff, let alone that by my nature and service experience I was inclined not to staff activity but rather to command.

At the beginning of 1941, when we learned of the concentrating of large German forces in Poland, Stalin sent a personal letter to Hitler, informing him that we had learned this, we were surprised by this and were gaining the impression that Hitler was intending to fight us. In reply Hitler sent Stalin a letter, also a personal one, and as he emphasized in the text, a confidential one. In this letter he wrote that our information was correct, that actually large troop formations had been concentrated in Poland but that he, being confident that this would go no farther than Stalin, should explain that the concentration of his troops in Poland was not directed against the Soviet Union, that he intended to strictly observe the concluded pact and this he guaranteed by his honor as a head of state. His troops had been concentrated in Poland for other purposes. The territory of Western and Central Germany had come under strong English bombing and could be clearly observed by the English from the air. For this reason, he was forced to shift large troop

contingents to the East in order to be able to covertly rearm and reconstitute them there, in Poland. As far as I know, Stalin believed this letter.

Subsequently, there were more and more causes for alarm. Confronted with the repeating alarming circles, the People's Commissariat of Defense succeeded in gaining from Stalin permission for a partial call-up of a half million reservists and to move another four armies into the Western districts.

As the chief of the General Staff, I realized that the shifting of the armies and the shifting of the men mobilized to the place of service would not remain a secret from the Germans and would alarm them and exacerbate the situation. As this was the case, simultaneously with the carrying out of these essential measures, the troops in the border districts should have been brought to combat readiness. I reported this to Stalin, but after requiring 2 weeks to persuade him to agree to the first two measures, he now refused to give his approval to this third measure directly related to the first two. He replied that the bringing of the troops in the border areas to combat readiness could lead to a war and he was convinced that we would be able to temporize and explain both the partial call-up and the moving of the armies in such a manner as not to alarm Hitler.

So it turned out that some of the measures were carried out but others not. In essence, we remained halfway and nothing good would come of it.

There was also disorder in the mobilization plan for setting up industry in wartime. In May, the 4th month after I had taken over the General Staff from Meretskov, I signed the mobilization plans which had basically been prepared before me for shifting industry to a wartime footing. Gathering up my courage, I went to see Voroshilov who at that time was the chairman of the Defense Committee and literally forced him to take these plans from me for review. I merely left them with him.

Regardless of my phone calls, for a month he had not begun to review these plans and only a month later, after a new call, did he say that I should go see him. It was essential to discuss how, with whose involvement and in what order the plans were to be reviewed. Having realized that things were being drawn out, I did not go see him but phoned Stalin and complained of what happened.

On the next day we, the military, were summoned to a session of the Politburo.

A dialogue followed between Stalin and Voroshilov.

"Why did you not review the plan?"

"We just received it recently."

"On what date did you deliver this plan to Voroshilov?"
(This question was addressed to me.)

I said that it had been a month ago.

After the corresponding reaction, a commission was set up for reviewing the plan. On the commission there were numerous disputes and squabbles. Some of the members said that there were supposedly too many questions, everything had to be broken down, but we could not break everything down and so forth.

Things dragged on and on. Seeing this, we were determined to see to it and did see to it that at least individual decisions were taken on the plan for preparing ammunition, but for all the remaining points this plan for setting up industry by the start of the war had not been approved.

During that winter and spring the situation was particularly difficult with ammunition. The new artillery systems which had been commissioned, including the anti-tank ones, were provided with only test series of shells. The already commenced production of the guns was also held up due to the delay with the shells.

We raised the question of establishing a year's supply of shells for the first year of a war, considering that after the conversion of industry to a wartime footing a production which would meet the needs of the war could be achieved only a year after its start.

Disputes broke out.

Voznesenskiy, a man who knew the economy, immediately estimated what an enormous number of shells we wanted to have on hand and with a pencil began to show that according to our estimates we were planning 500 rounds to hit one enemy tank.

"Is this really possible?"

We had to answer him that this was not only possible but essential and that it would be outstanding if it took us 500 and not a thousand rounds to destroy each German tank.

"Have such standards for hitting tanks been incorporated in all your documents?" asked Voznesenskiy.

"Well, these are the kill standards in exercises but in war it is a different matter."

A commission was established.

After all the estimates, we discovered that the production of such an amount of shells could be supplied with metal, but it was impossible to provide the powders as the situation with powders was terrible.

As a result, it was proposed that our request be met by just 15-20 percent.

In speaking about the prewar period and about what caused our failures at the start of the war, not everything can be reduced to just the personal mistakes of Stalin or to some degree to the personal mistakes of Timoshenko and Zhukov.

There is a point there. There were mistakes.

But one must also remember certain objective data. We must give some thought and reckon what at that time we and our army were as well as Germany with its army. How much higher was its military potential, industrial level, the level of industrial efficiency, the level of general preparedness for a war.

After conquering Europe, the Germans had not only a strong battle-tested army which was in the field and in full combat readiness, not only ideally organized staff work and cooperation of the infantry, artillery, tanks and aviation timed down to the hour. The Germans had over us an enormous advantage in military industrial potential. They surpassed us by nearly 3-fold in terms of coal, by 2.5-fold for iron and steel. In truth we had an advantage for oil both in terms of reserves and the amount of output. But even regardless of this, we, for example, by the start of a war would not have the required amount of high octane gasoline for the modern aircraft such as the MIGs which we were beginning to receive.

In a word, it must not be forgotten that we were entering a war while still continuing to be an industrially backward nation in comparison with Germany.

Finally, it is essential to add that Hitler, from the day he came to power, subordinated absolutely everything to the interests of a future war, everything was organized counting on a victory in this war, and everything was done for this and only for this. We had not taken such a stance, halting half-way. The interests of the departments clashed one with another, there was an endless bartering over each question involving the weapons for the army and preparations for a war. All of this also had to be put on the scales, in explaining the reasons for our defeats and setbacks during the first year of the war.

Stalin felt and felt correctly that in order to prepare for a war we would need a minimum of at least 2 years. These would be needed both for the military-strategic development of the areas occupied by us in 1939 as well as for reorganizing the army, including in the technical area and where we lagged greatly behind. Although a good deal was done during the year between the end of the Finnish Campaign and the outbreak of the war, we would actually have needed another nearly 2 years to be completely prepared for a war.

Stalin considered the information coming from Churchill and other sources about a pending German attack as a completely logical desire of the English to set us at loggerheads with the Germans and more quickly involve us in a war for which, in his conviction, we were not prepared. He also considered that provocations were possible not only from the English but also from certain German generals, inclined, in his opinion, toward a preventive war and ready to confront Hitler with a fait accompli. Regardless of the position I then held as the chief of the General Staff, at that time I knew absolutely nothing about the information provided by Sorge. Obviously the reports on this went directly to Stalin via Beriya and Stalin did not consider it essential to inform us about these reports which he had.

We did have information on the stationing of significant military forces in Poland, but Stalin in principle felt that it went without saying that the Germans would keep large units along our frontiers, knowing that we in turn were keeping a large number of troops on the frontier and considering the possibility of the violating of the pact by our side. But the immediate concentration of the German assault groupings was carried out just during the last 2 or 3 days before the war. And during these 2 or 3 days, the scouts were unable to get to us the information which would have comprised a complete picture of what was being prepared.

What is surprise?

How surprise is interpreted now and how it was interpreted in the speeches of Stalin are incorrect, incomplete and one-sided.

What does surprise mean when we speak about actions of such scale? Certainly this was not merely the surprise crossing of the frontier by the enemy, not merely its surprise attack. The surprise of crossing the frontier by the Germans would not have solved anything in and of itself. The main danger was not that the Germans crossed the frontier but that we did not expect the assault might of the German Army; we did not expect their 6- and 8-fold superiority in forces on the crucial axes; the scale of concentration of their troops and the force of their assault were also unexpected for us. This was the main thing that determined our losses in the first period of the war. And not merely or just the surprise crossing of the frontier by them.

The start of the war found me as the chief of the General Staff. The situation for work on the General Staff during those days was extremely difficult. We were constantly retreating, constantly late, and took delayed, untimely decisions.

Finally Stalin posed the direct question to me:

"Why are we always late?"

And I replied to him also directly that with our current system of work it could not be otherwise.

As the chief of the General Staff, I received my first report at 0900 hours. For it immediate measures must now be taken. But I myself cannot do this. I report to People's Commissar Timoshenko. But the people's commissar also cannot take decisions. We are obliged to report this to you. We must go to the Kremlin and wait for a meeting. At 0100 or 0200 hours, you take the decisions. We go back, draw them up and send orders to the field. During this time the situation has already changed. You wanted to hold a certain point, for instance, Ivanovka, and more troops up to it. But during this time the Germans have already taken it. Conversely, you wish to move troops out of a certain other point. But during this time the Germans have already outflanked it and cut it off. Between the receiving of the data requiring immediate decisions and those decisions which we take some 7-8 hours are lost. And during this time the German tanks have covered 40-50 km and we, having received new information, take a new decision but, again, we are late.

I reported to Stalin that, in my view, a two-tiered command is impossible. Either I, as the chief of the General Staff, should report to Timoshenko so that he, without seeking the agreement of anyone, immediately takes the decisions; or I should report all of this directly to you so that you would immediately take these decisions. Otherwise, we will continue to be late.

By the beginning of July, the incorrectness of the adopted system and the perniciousness of the procrastinating had become apparent to Stalin himself. Timoshenko was appointed the commander of the Western Sector while Stalin himself assumed the duties of Supreme Commander-in-Chief. With the eliminating of this double-tiered system, our work began to assume a more normal and more effective nature. Moreover, the stunned state in which we had been during the first 10 days of the war had somewhat dissipated. Severe events continued to happen but we were now psychologically accustomed to this and endeavored to rectify the situation, proceeding from the actually developing conditions.

In recalling the prewar period, it must be said that, of course, we, the military, were to blame for the fact that we did not sufficiently demand the bringing of the army to combat readiness and the immediate passage of a number of measures essential in the event of a war. Obviously, we should have done this more decisively than we did. Nevertheless, regardless of all the infallibility of Stalin's authority, somewhere deep in your soul there was a worm of doubt, a feeling of the threat of German attack. Of course, one must realize what at that time it meant to run contrary to Stalin in an assessment of the general political situation. Everyone still recalled the recent years. To state out loud that Stalin was wrong

and that he had made a mistake, simply speaking, would then mean that without leaving the building you would go for a cup of coffee with Beriya.

But this is still just one aspect of the truth. And I should say it all. I did not feel then, prior to the war, that I was smarter or more foresighted than Stalin or that I assessed the situation better than he or knew more. I did not have my own assessment of events which I could have confidently opposed as more correct than the assessments of Stalin. I had no such conviction. Conversely, I had enormous trust in Stalin, in his political mind, in his farsightedness and ability to find ways out of the most difficult situations. In the given instance I had trust in his ability to escape from a war, to distance ourselves from it. But concern gnawed at my soul. But trust in Stalin and in the fact that ultimately everything would turn out precisely as he had assumed was stronger. No matter how you look at things now, this was the truth. [End of Zhukov's comments]

2. In the previous chapter, we have given certain notes describing the perception of Stalin's personality as Zhukov saw this by the start of the war.

During the war, Zhukov knew Stalin much more closely. His view of Stalin as it developed in the course of the war is of value because this view is based on the enormous 4-year experience of working together. For Zhukov, Stalin during the war years was primarily the Supreme Commander-in-Chief with whom during all these years he, as a rule, worked closely without intermediate levels, directly both in the role of the chief of the General Staff and in the role of the commander of various fronts, remaining here a member of Headquarters, as well as in the role of the deputy commander-in-chief and coordinator of the actions of several fronts.

For Zhukov, Stalin during the war was the man who assumed the most difficult position in a belligerent state. And Zhukov noticed primarily those traits of Stalin's nature which became apparent precisely in the performing of these duties. For this reason the portrait of Stalin which emerges in these notes taken in the words of Zhukov, although not claiming completeness, is marked by a concreteness of observation relating to that common job which they both did. Let me also add that present in this portrait, of course, are also personal emotions which introduce an aspect of subjectivity.

In grouping these notes, I have arbitrarily divided them into two parts: the notes reflecting various moments of the war have been placed in chronological order; the notes in which Zhukov's over-all view of Stalin's personality during the war years is depicted have been given without observing a chronology.

Thus, first the notes reflecting the chronology of events.

[Comments by Zhukov himself] I spoke with Stalin for the first time in my life in 1940, after my return from Kalkhin-Gol. I went to see him, it must be admitted, with some trepidation but he received me very well. I saw a man who at first appearance was the most ordinary, short, even shorter than I, calm, courteous, and who seemed to me very attentive and human.

For a long time he questioned me closely about events in Mongolia and about my conclusions.

Impressions of subsequent meetings with Stalin are remembered differently and these meetings themselves were very different. He was a man with a great sense of humor and sometimes, when things were going well, he was, as in our first meeting, attentive and human. But in a majority of instances, actually almost always, he was serious and tense. In him you almost always felt this tension which operated also on those around. I always appreciated—and one could not help appreciate this—the brevity with which he was able to explain his thoughts and set tasks, without saying a single superfluous word. In turn he also valued this brevity in others and demanded that reports be informative and brief. He could not tolerate superfluous words and in such instances insisted on immediately getting to the heart of the matter.

With his Georgian accent, he had a magnificent mastery of Russian and, it can be said without exaggeration, was an expert on it. This was apparent even in details. Once, during the period of my work as chief of the General Staff, in dictating a directive to me and impatiently looking over his shoulder, he suddenly said to me:

"Well, should I come along and put in the commas?"

And when I said half-jokingly that I was no expert in commas, he replied perfectly seriously:

"But an incorrectly placed comma can sometimes change the essence of what was said."

He could also be coarse, very much so. In my nature, I in certain instances did not keep things to myself. It even happened that I replied sharply to his coarseness and did not consciously, because sometimes it was essential to dispute, otherwise I could not do my job.

Once, half-jokingly and half-seriously, turning to two persons present at our conversation, he said:

"What do you have to say? All you say is: 'Yes, Comrade Stalin,' 'Of course, Comrade Stalin,' 'Quite right, Comrade Stalin,' 'You have taken a wise decision, Comrade Stalin...' Only Zhukov sometimes disputes with me..."

At the end of July 1941, while still holding the position of chief of the General Staff, in analyzing the situation, I concluded that the Germans in the near future would not

continue to advance against Moscow until they had eliminated the threat to the right flank of their grouping aimed at Moscow and coming from the right flank of our Southwestern Front.

In line with this I set down in writing my considerations on the necessity, having abandoned Kiev, to take up a strong defense along the eastern bank of the Dnieper, to reinforce the right flank of the Southwestern Front and concentrate behind it two reserve armies for parrying the German thrust. I assumed that the Germans could launch this thrust against the right flank of the Southwestern Front, coming out in its rear.

Having read the document written by me, Stalin called me in. Beriia and Mekhlis were with him. Stalin in their presence dressed me down, saying that I wrote all sorts of rubbish, that I piled it on and so forth. All of this was in a very coarse form.

I replied to this:

"Comrade Stalin, would you please watch your words. I am the chief of the General Staff. If you, as the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, feel that your chief of the General Staff is talking rubbish, then he should be removed from his position and this I request of you."

In reply to this he told me:

"Leave us and we will discuss your request."

I was called back 40 minutes later and Stalin in a calmer tone told me:

"We decided to satisfy your request. You have been relieved of the post of the chief of the General Staff. What do you want to do? What work should we give you?"

I said that I could go command a corps, an army or a front. I felt that I would be of greater benefit commanding a front.

In those written ideas of mine over which this conversation had commenced and which had cost my removal from the position of chief of the General Staff, I among other things wrote that on the Western Front it was necessary to eliminate the Yelnya salient which by this time had already been occupied by the Germans and threatened great complications for us.

Now when the question arose of where I should be appointed, I said that I wanted to be able to conduct this operation.

"You want to advance?" asked Stalin ironically.

"Yes, I do," I replied.

"Do you feel that with our troops it is possible to conduct an offensive?" he continued just as ironically. "They have not yet been capable of a single offensive and yet you intend to advance?"

I replied that I did and I hoped for success.

After I had been appointed to command the front and had carried out the Yelnya Operation, I in my new position again reported to Stalin on my previous concerns over the danger of a German attack from the northwest to the southeast, into the rear of our Southwestern Front. This time, he responded differently to these ideas. And he even found the strength to tell me:

"You reported to me correctly at that time, but I did not understand you quite correctly."

After this he switched to saying that Budennyi was poorly carrying out the command of the Southwestern Sector.

"Who, in your opinion, should replace him?"

Having thought that he, possibly, had myself in mind, I replied that, in my view, Timoshenko should be sent to the Southwestern Sector and that he possessed authority in the troops, experience and in addition was by nationality an Ukrainian which was important under the conditions of the operations developing in the Ukraine.

Remaining quiet for a moment, and, as I realized from what happened later, having accepted this decision, Stalin began talking about Leningrad and the Leningrad Front. The situation developing around Leningrad at that moment was seen by him as catastrophic. I remember that he even used the word "hopeless." He said that obviously after another few days Leningrad must be considered lost. And with the loss of Leningrad, the Germans would link up with the Finns and as a result an extremely dangerous grouping would arise there, hanging over Moscow from the north.

Having said all of this, he asked me:

"What do you intend to do now?"

With some surprise I replied that I intended to go back, back to the front.

"Well, what if you did not go back but received a different appointment?"

Having heard this, I said that if this were the case, then I would want to go to command the Leningrad Front.

"And if this was a hopeless case?" he said.

I voiced the hope that it was not yet so hopeless.

"When can you go?" he asked shortly.

I replied that if I were to go I preferred going immediately.

"Immediate is impossible. First we have to organize a fighter escort for you."

And he immediately phoned the aviators requesting a weather forecast from them. While he was waiting for the weather forecast, he asked who, in my opinion, should be appointed my successor on the Western Front. I replied the commander of the 19th Army, Konev.

By that time the aviators had provided the forecast. The forecast for the morning was bad: fog.

Stalin said: "There is bad weather. But for you it means good."

And he immediately wrote out a brief note:

"To Voroshilov. The GKO appoints Army Gen Zhukov the commander of the Leningrad Front. Turn over the front to him and return on the same aircraft. Stalin."

This note was also my appointment.

Having put it in my pocket, in the morning I climbed in the aircraft, flew to Leningrad and took over the front. [End of Zhukov's comments]

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Experience of Commanders, Staffs, Political Bodies in Maintaining High Troop Discipline in Great Patriotic War

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[Article by Col R.M. Portugalskiy, doctor of historical sciences, professor: "From the Work Experience of Commanders, Staffs and Political Bodies in Maintaining High Troop Discipline During the Years of the Great Patriotic War"]

[Text] High military discipline which presupposes the strict and precise observance by all servicemen of order and the rules established by the laws, troop regulations and orders, is one of the main conditions for troop combat capability and readiness and an important factor for achieving victory in a battle and operation. This truth has been repeatedly affirmed by history. V.I. Lenin saw the guarantee for the successes of the Red Army precisely in a discipline based upon a profound awareness by the personnel of their responsibility to defend the motherland. He emphasized that "we have brought the Red Army to victory not only by agitation but also by strict, iron discipline"(1) and that "without this iron discipline,

we would not have created the Red Army, we would not have withstood the 2 years of fighting and generally could not have resisted organized and united capital."(2)

In giving primary significance to military discipline, V.I. Lenin also repeatedly pointed out that organization and order in the troops do not arise spontaneously. They are the result of systematic and purposeful activity by the commanders, the staffs, political bodies, the party and Komsomol organizations. Precisely this determines in our days the attention paid to the search for the most effective, scientifically sound ways for further increasing the level of political, military, moral, legal, aesthetic and physical indoctrination of the servicemen as well as improving the style and methods of work in carrying out the tasks of strengthening military discipline. Here a great deal of help can come from the creative use of experience gained by the commanders, staffs and political bodies during the years of the Great Patriotic War.

The war, as is known, commenced under unfavorable conditions for our people. Regardless of this, the Soviet soldiers courageously fought the strong and perfidious enemy, showing mass heroism, loyalty to their military oath, steadfastness and organization in combat. Proof of this is, for example, the Order of the People's Commissar of Defense of 18 September 1941 which emphasizes that the rifle divisions which were awarded the title of guards, "had succeeded in beating the enemy and driving the lauded German troops ahead of them" because they "did not fall into a panic, they did not throw down their weapons and did not flee to the woods...but in an organized manner replied attack for enemy attack, they harshly checked the panicking troops and mercilessly dealt with cowards...thereby providing discipline and organization.... The commanders and commissars of these divisions behaved as courageous and exacting superiors able to get their subordinates to carry out orders...."(3)

Even our enemies were forced to recognize the unprecedented steadfastness and courage of the Soviet soldiers. A week after the start of the war, the chief of the General Staff of the German Ground Troops wrote in his diary: "Information from the front confirms that the Russians everywhere are fighting to the last man."(4) One of the leaders of German military intelligence, Gen Tippleskirch, stated that the "Russians held out with unexpected firmness and stubbornness even when they were outflanked and surrounded."(5)

However, in the troops there were instances of a lack of discipline. These were expressed in the absence without leave of certain subunits and units from their occupied positions and in individual manifestations of cowardice, a lack of organization and irresponsibility. The orders issued by superior chiefs were not always carried out precisely and at the designated time. As a consequence of the unsatisfactory work of certain staffs, operational-tactical information was late in arriving and often did

not reflect the true state of affairs. In the observing of the requirements of covert troop command "there were irresponsibly criminal facts and complete laxness of the commanders."(6)

The Communist Party, the Soviet government and the military leadership bodies took a number of measures aimed at strengthening military discipline in the troops. During the summer and autumn of 1941, there were issued the decrees of the VKP(b) Central Committee, the directives and orders of the GKO, Hq SHC, the People's Commissar of Defense and the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army demanding that order be established in the troops, that indoctrinational work be strengthened and strict measures applied against those who violated their oath, showed hesitation in battle and did not carry out the orders and instructions of the commanders and superiors. Thus, in October 1941, our party's Central Committee adopted a decree which obliged the military councils, the political bodies as well as the military commissars to intensify daily explanatory work, persuading the men that for defeating the enemy the greatest self-sacrifice and organization are required. "At present, as never before," stated the Directive of the People's Commissar of Defense and Chief of the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army of 20 July 1941, "there must be a will for victory, ideological solidarity, iron discipline, organization, the greatest self-sacrifice and a readiness to make any sacrifices for the sake of victory over the enemy."(7)

In analyzing the reasons for the setbacks of our troops in the Crimea, Hq SHC in the Directive of 4 June 1942 mentioned the following of them: a lack of discipline, inefficiency, negligence, a bureaucratic method of leadership by the command and staff of the Crimean Front. It demanded that the commanders and military councils of all the fronts and armies draw lessons from these errors. "The task consists," the directive emphasized, "in having our command personnel, commissars and political workers completely eradicate elements of a lack of discipline among the great and small commanders."(8)

The retreat of the Soviet troops to the southwest in the summer of 1943, substantially complicated the operational-strategic situation. It was exacerbated by a disturbing of order and by lower discipline in a number of formations and units and this necessitated the taking of extraordinary measures. Of exceptionally important significance was the Order of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 227 of 28 June which set out the harsh truth about the danger hanging over the nation, it stated the inadmissibility of a further retreat and set out measures to strengthen combat morale and discipline of the troops.

The order stated: "The enemy is throwing constantly new forces against the front and without considering the heavy losses for itself is crawling forward and pushing into the interior of the Soviet Union, capturing new areas, devastating and destroying our towns and villages, coerces, plunders and kills the Soviet population.... To

retreat further would mean to ruin ourselves and at the same time our motherland.... From this it follows that the time has come to end the retreat.

"Not a step backward! This now should become our main appeal."

The order particularly emphasized that due to the heroic efforts of the rear workers, the front was receiving evermore combat equipment needed for a victory over the enemy. However, there still "was a lack of order and discipline in the companies, battalions and regiments, in the divisions, in the tank units and air squadrons. This now is our main shortcoming. In our army we must establish strictest order and iron discipline if we want to save the situation and defend our motherland....

"From now on the demand of not a step back without orders from the higher command should be an iron law of discipline for each commander, Red Armyman and political worker...."(9)

On the following day, the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army issued a directive explaining to the personnel the essence of this order.

In carrying out the instructions of the Central Committee, the GKO and Hq SHC, the commanders, the staffs and the political bodies during the war years carried out great organizational work in strengthening combat morale and discipline in the troops. Here they were guided by the well known advice of M.V. Frunze that the commanders and political workers must always remember three Leninist conditions which are a guarantee of strong and conscious discipline. "The first condition is self-sacrifice and the steadfastness of the command and political personnel; the second condition is the maintaining of a vital, organic link of this command personnel with the Red Army mass and the third is that this Red Army mass see in practice and in deed the justness of our leadership."(10)

The purposefulness and concreteness in the activities of the military councils, the commanders, the political bodies, the party and Komsomol organizations in the area of indoctrinating the personnel in a spirit of iron military discipline during the first months of the Great Patriotic War brought their fruit. The force of rebuffing the enemy increased, order and organization in the troops were strengthened, and the combat tasks were carried out more effectively. Proof of this was the defeat of the Nazi hordes at Moscow and Stalingrad and the subsequent operations of the Soviet troops.

An analysis of the work of the commanders, the staffs, political bodies and other headquarters bodies in the area of strengthening discipline provides grounds to conclude that the most important areas of this work

were: active involvement of the leadership in the political indoctrination of the personnel, in instituting and maintaining prescribed order in the troops, the examples set in carrying out military duty, great exactingness on oneself and subordinates, strict supervision and constant concern for the men.

The active involvement of the leadership in political indoctrination aimed at inculcating responsibility in the personnel for carrying out military duty, the demands of the military oath and the military regulations during the war years became one of the effective forms for maintaining strong discipline in the troops.

Thus, in July 1941, upon the decision of the Western Front Military Council, all the army commanders, chiefs of staff and commanders (chiefs) of the combat arms and special troops took a direct part in explaining to the commanders and troops the tasks stemming from the Decree of the Politburo of the VKP(b) Central Committee of 27 June on mobilizing the communists and Komsomol members for strengthening party political work in the Red Army units, the directive of the USSR SNK [Council of People's Commissars] and the VKP(b) Central Committee of 29 June containing a program for mobilizing all the nation's forces to rebuff the Nazi aggressors as well as the demands of the "Pamyatki krasnoarmeytsu" [Instructions to the Red Armyman] published in June and particularly emphasizing that "the strength of the army lies in discipline.... Strong military discipline is the guarantee for victory in combat." (11) The units and subunits held talks, political information sessions and reports on the subjects "V.I. Lenin on Discipline in the Red Army," "Discipline and Organization—The Guarantee of Victory" and "What It Means to Be Disciplined in Combat."

The involvement of the leadership in explanatory work was a typical phenomenon for the troops of the 62d and 64th Armies in the summer of 1942 in conducting the heavy defensive battles on the Stalingrad Sector, for the 5th Tank Army and 21st Army of the Southwestern Front in the autumn of 1942 in preparing for the Stalingrad Counteroffensive, for the 67th and 2d Assault Armies in the winter of 1942-1943 on the eve of breaking the Leningrad blockade. It was essential for each soldier to be profoundly aware of what significance discipline has in combat and what its role is in achieving victory. This task was carried out in the course of collective and individual talks, at political information sessions, meetings and conferences, with the party activists and at party and Komsomol assemblies. The printed word was widely employed in newspapers, leaflets, instructions and combat leaflets.

Indicative is the example of the explanatory work carried out by the leadership of the 5th Assault Army in fighting on the Kustrin bridgehead in February 1945. The situation was tense. The Nazis were continuously attacking with strong forces endeavoring to push our units back behind the Oder. At this time the army military council

received a telegram from the commander of the First Belorussian Front, MSU G.K. Zhukov. It stated: "The 5th Assault Army is entrusted with a particularly crucial task of holding the captured bridgehead on the west bank of the Oder River and widening it.... I ask all of you to realize the historical responsibility for carrying out the task given to you and, having described this to your men, to demand from the troops exceptional steadfastness and valor." (12) In carrying out these instructions, the military council members, the deputy commanders and the chief of the army political section immediately set off for the bridgehead. The commanders and all the party political personnel of the formations and units informed all the soldiers and commanders of the instructions from the front's commander. Where the situation permitted meetings were held. Those speaking solemnly vowed to carry out their duty with honor. (13)

The taking of emergency measures by the leadership in instilling firm prescribed order in the troops was required in those instances when the attacks by superior enemy forces caused panic among the personnel and certain men abandoned their posts. Under such conditions for a decisive effect on the men in the vacillating units, the commanders (chiefs) and the political workers went to them and they by their exactingness, persuasive explanations and appeals restored organization, discipline and battleworthiness in the troops.

The high effectiveness of such actions can be seen, for example, from the memoirs of MSU K.K. Rokossovskiy.

"Do you know," he asks the reader, "what fleeing soldiers are? It is difficult to look at this.... But all of a sudden from the midst of the fleeing soldiers loud voices were heard from the men themselves:

" 'Stop! Where are you running? Back!...' "

" 'Don't you see the generals are standing.... Back!...' "

"Yes, in fact, Ivan Pavlovich Kamera (commander of the army artillery.—R.P.) and I were standing tall, in the view of all the soldiers, realizing that only this could save the situation.

"The soldiers' voices and our tenacity had a magic effect. The fleeing soldiers returned to their places and by their accurate fire forced the enemy infantry which has risen for the assault to again hit the dirt." (14)

An analogous situation was taken by the commander of the 19th Army, Lt Gen I.S. Konev, who was traveling with a small group of staff workers on 5 July 1941 for reconnaissance into the Vitebsk area, where he encountered our retreating subunits. "He got out of the vehicle," recalled the former special *Pravda* correspondent, B.N. Polevoy, "he removed his coat so that his insignias could be seen on his shoulderboards and began stopping the retreating troops, turning first to those who looked as

if they were veterans. He tried to speak calmly. He gave orders in a low voice. This severe and confident tone of the general inspired confidence in the men.”(15)

In the summer of 1941, when fighting developed directly around Zaporozhye and Dnepropetrovsk, a real threat arose that the enemy would cut off the main forces of the Southern Front from the Dnieper crossings. During the night of 16 August, the front commander sent an operations group to the Zaporozhye bridgehead headed by the deputy chief of staff of the front, Maj Gen F.M. Kharitonov. A document has survived from those days which shows: “...Maj Gen Kharitonov and a group of commanders from the front's staff and political directorate, having arrived at the combat area, decisively stopped the fleeing men, quickly organized subunits from them, instilled order in them, quieted them down, appointed commanders and commissars, restored troop morale and as a result of this the units began to rebuff the enemy with greater steadfastness.”(16)

It is well known that in all wars of the past the troops responded particularly sharply to encirclement and this often contributed to the outbreak of panic and to a sharp decline in discipline and organization. Similar instances were noted during the years of the Great Patriotic War, particularly in its initial period, when certain of our units and formations responded in panic to announcements and rumors of the landing of paratroopers in their rear or the appearance of a large number of enemy tanks. It was possible to prevent panic only by decisive actions from the leadership. In September 1941, for example, the 111th Rifle Division under the command of Maj Gen S.V. Roginskiy was fighting hard in an encirclement to the west of Chudovo. When the order was received from the commander of the 52d Army to break out of the encirclement, the division's commander took a decision to break out to link up with our troops not in small groups but rather in organized units. “Prior to the start of moving to the breakout point,” recalled S.V. Roginskiy, “we conducted meetings in the regiments. The goal and tasks were thoroughly explained to the soldiers and officers for the forthcoming fighting in breaking through to the Volkhov and its crossing, and the necessity of carrying out the set task at any price.”(17) In fighting their way out, the division crossed the river and linked up with the army main forces. Thus, the firmly carried out decision to maintain the organizational integrity of the units and the formation, the maintaining of high troop morale and instilling confidence in the personnel in the achieving of the set goal led to positive results.

An important condition for maintaining high military discipline during the war years was the **personal example set by the commanders, political workers, officials of the staff and other headquarters bodies in carrying out military duty.** Participants to the events of the Great Patriotic War give evidence that such qualities as cool-headedness, self-possession, restraint, efficiency, self-sacrifice, self-discipline, and loyalty to the military oath were possessed by the army commanders, Gens P.I.

Batov, A.V. Gorbatov, M.F. Yefremov, A.S. Zhadov, N.P. Pukhov, P.S. rybalko and V.I. Chuykov, the army chiefs of staff, Gens M.V. Ivashechkin, L.M. Sandalov, M.A. Shalin and many others. The willpower and steadfastness of Vasilii Ivanovich Chuykov can be set as an example, emphasized Army Gen S.M. Shtemenko in his memoirs.(18)

For example, a major role was played by the courage of Lt Gen M.M. Popov, the deputy commander of the Southwestern Front, when in February 1943, on the Kharkov axis the group led by him was counterattacked by superior enemy forces. Under the most difficult situational conditions, Markian Mikhaylovich [Popov], using all his power and showing personal bravery and tenacity, was able to organize the rebuff of the enemy. A strong defense was organized in the Barvenkovo area, and all attempts by the enemy to break through to Kharkov across the Severskiy Donets were shattered on this.(19)

The war confirmed with all obviousness the validity of the idea voiced by M.V. Frunze in the 1920s that “the discipline of the rank-and-file is influenced worst by the slightest instances of undisciplined behavior by the superiors.”(20) “Getting to within about 3 km to the forward defensive edge,” recalled, for example, Army Gen A.V. Gorbatov, describing the events at Vitebsk in July 1941, “I saw a general disorderly retreat along the highway.... In the midst of the soldiers were confused commanders of various ranks.... It was clear to me that...the main reason for the retreat was the weakness of the commanders who had been overwhelmed by the panic and they themselves had given way to fear.”(21)

During the war years, a most important area in the organizing activities of the commanders and staffs was their high principled **demandingness on subordinates.** One of the forms for the manifesting of this exactingness was the taking of the strictest measures of administrative action against those commanders and other officials who in a combat situation permitted a lack of discipline bordering on a crime. An example of this was the relieving of positions for the chief of staff and the chief of the operations section of the 2d Assault Army (February 1942), the commander of the XI Tank Corps (June 1944) and the commander of the XXV Tank Corps (September 1944). At times, the various officials for personal lack of discipline were held responsible under party, administrative and even court proceedings. “In the event of an infraction of discipline,” stated the order to the 63d Army in October 1942, “the guilty parties will be strictly punished, even to the point of turning over to a military tribunal.”(22)

Great work was done to prevent infractions of military discipline. For example, the military council of the 39th Army (commander, Maj Gen A.I. Zygin) in the summer and autumn of 1942 regularly listened to reports by the formation commanders on the status of military discipline. The staff together with the political section in the

field studied the state of affairs in the 158th Rifle Division and the 879th Rifle Regiment. The positive experience of the commanders in instilling order in the units and subunits, the detected shortcomings and the recommendations worked out to eliminate them were issued to all command personnel in an order of the army commander. In the spring of 1943, the military council of this army turned to the commanders and political workers in a letter on the need to improve disciplinary practices, and in the summer of 1944, on the questions of improving vigilance, and in March 1945, to improve law and order in the troops. The contents of the documents was explained at meetings of the command and political personnel, it was discussed at party and Komsomol meetings and issued to all the personnel by talks, leaflets and instructions as well as at meetings.(23)

Of extremely important significance in strengthening military discipline during the war years was well organized **supervision over the execution of adopted decisions, issued orders, instructions and regulations.** V.I. Lenin drew particular attention to this aspect of organizational activities, emphasizing that the inability to monitor execution "...in military affairs is the direct end."(24) The experience of the Great Patriotic War also showed the necessity of supervisory functions of the leadership.

Thus, the course and outcome of the concluding stage of the Kalinin Offensive Operation in December 1941 was negatively influenced by the poorly organized supervision over the execution of orders issued in the formations of the 29th Army.(25) The lack of supervision was one of the reasons for the failure of the Soviet troop offensive in the Crimea in January 1942. The commander of the 3d Assault Army, in summing up the results of combat in August 1944, emphasized that "control was frequently lost as a consequence of the poor efficiency of the staffs and poorly organized supervision."(26) The insufficiently organized inspection of the preparations of the 49th Army had a negative influence on the course of its fighting during the first stage of the Berlin Operation.(27)

The war disclosed the most effective methods and forms of supervision in the interests of maintaining discipline in the troops. Proving particularly effective was the practice of having the formations and units be visited by the commander, the military council members and other officials as well as the representatives (officers from the operations section of the staff assigned to one or another formation). There was also the practice of integrated inspections combined with the providing of aid on the spot. These involved representatives of all the staffs and the political bodies of the field headquarters. An analysis of the supervisory plans for the 11th Guards Army, the 5th and 65th Armies on the eve of the Belorussian Operation shows that the main questions were the inspecting of troop combat readiness, the execution of battle orders, the state of military discipline, and the

supply of the formations and units with everything essential for combat. The results of the supervision were usually reflected in orders and were issued to the leadership at meetings.

The concern of the commanders, staffs and political bodies for the everyday life of the men also contributed largely to maintaining strong military discipline.

Here is what the former military council member of the 39th Army, Lt Gen V.R. Boyko, has to write about this: "At a session of the military council (April 1943—R.P.) involving the workers of the staff, the political section and the rear services of the army, the commanders and political workers of the formations, we again examined the entire range of measures to improve diet, routine and cultural services for the personnel.

"For a young reader this may all seem to be minor details. But during those harsh days everything that strengthened the force of the soldier and relieved the enormous psychological stresses was measured by different rules.... That was how we viewed the question: concern for victory!"(28)

The forms for carrying out this task varied. Experience showed that rather often it was effective to have an immediate response by the commander as well as the staff to instances of mismanagement, inefficiency, slowness, deception, and the desire of the officials responsible for this area of work to justify their own idleness by objective factors.

In the strengthening of military discipline, a major role was played by the systematic contact of the commanders and other officials with the inferior commanders and soldiers and this made it possible to promptly take measures on many questions in the life and activities of the troop collectives. "I.D. Chernyakhovskiy (at that time, the commander of the 60th Army.—R.P.)," recalled Army Gen P.N. Lashchenko, "particularly liked to talk with the soldiers in the trenches on the forward edge, at the artillery and mortar positions and in the dugouts. He frequently visited the field hospitals and took an interest in whether the men were being treated and fed well, whether they were receiving newspapers and letters and whether they were being visited by their combat comrades. The remaining members of the military council acted in precisely the same manner."(29)

Of equally important significance was the aid from the commanders and staffs to the rear services in carrying out the tasks of promptly supplying the formations, units and subunits with ammunition, fuel and providing the personnel with food and clothing. Most often this help was expressed in the assigning of additional transport, the issuing of orders to redistribute the supplies of materiel, organize security for the rear facilities and units and defend the delivery and evacuation routes.

The Great Patriotic War, having confirmed the well-known thesis that strong military discipline is a most important condition for victory on the battlefield, enriched the theory and practice with the valuable experience of the activities of the commanders, staffs and political bodies in carrying out the tasks to maintain this discipline. The acquired experience is also timely now, when the restructuring of the work of the military personnel aimed, in light of the demands of the January and June (1987) Plenums of the CPSU Central Committee at increasing the combat readiness of the troops, strengthening discipline and improving the skills of the personnel, is developing along an ever-wider front.

Footnotes

1. V.I. Lenin, PSS [Complete Collected Works], Vol 40, p 112.
2. Ibid., pp 117-118.
3. "Sbornik boyevykh dokumentov Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Collection of Combat Documents From the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, No 5, 1947, pp 6-7.
4. " 'Sovershenno sekretno! Tolko dlya komandovaniya': Dokumenty i materialy" ["Top Secret! For Eyes of Command Only": Documents and Materials], Moscow, Nauka, 1967, p 237.
5. K. Tippelskirch, "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny" [History of World War II], Moscow, Izd-vo Inostrannoy literatury, 1956, pp 190, 228.
6. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 226, inv. 14925, file 1, sheet 113.
7. Ibid., folio 32, inv. 795436, file 3, sheet 322.
8. A.M. Vasilevskiy, "Delo vsey zhizni" [A Cause of One's Entire Life], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1984, pp 170-172.
9. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 5, 1975, pp 166-167.
10. M.V. Frunze, "Izbrannyye proizvedeniya" [Selected Works], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1977, p 268.
11. TsAMO, folio 41, inv. 920265, file 3, sheet 93.
12. G.K. Zhukov, "Vospominaniya i razmyshleniya" [Remembrances and Reflections], Moscow, Izd-vo APN, 7th Edition, Vol 3, 1986, p 199.
13. *Voyenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No 5, 1972, p 53.
14. K.K. Rokossovskiy, "Soldatskiy dolg" [A Soldier's Duty], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1972, p 33.
15. B.N. Polevoy, "Polkovodets" [General], Moscow, Politizdat, 1974, p 54.
16. TsAMO, folio 229, inv. 3955, file 1, sheet 233.
17. *Voyenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No 7, 1959, p 45.
18. S.M. Shtemenko, "Generalnyy shtab v gody voyny" [The General Staff During the War Years], Moscow, Voenizdat, Book 2, 1981, p 476.
19. Ibid., pp 475-476.
20. M.V. Frunze, op. cit., p 234.
21. A.V. Gorbатов, "Gody i voyny" [Years and Wars], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1965, p 176.
22. TsAMO, folio 312, inv. 5996, file 15, sheet 156.
23. Ibid., folio 237, inv. 2414, file 127, sheets 18-20.
24. V.I. Lenin, PSS, Vol 51, p 50.
25. "Sbornik voyenno-istoricheskikh materialov Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Collection of Military History Materials From the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, No 7, 1952, pp 56-57.
26. TsAMO, folio 317, inv. 13497, file 2, sheet 240.
27. K.K. Rokossovskiy, op. cit., pp 358-359.
28. V.R. Boyko, "S dymoy o Rodine" [With Thoughts for the Motherland], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1982, pp 61-62.
29. P.N. Lashchenko, "Iskusstvo voyenachalnika" [Art of the General], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1986, p 37.

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Pioneer of Series Tank Construction

18010027i Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
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21 Aug 87) pp 69-71

[Article by Lt Col (Res) A.A. Beskurnikov: "A Pioneer of Series Tank Construction"]

[Text] The first 15 tanks were manufactured in our country upon instructions of V.I. Lenin at the Krasnoye Sormovo Plant in 1920-1922. The further development of the tank industry was aided by the Decree of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee of 15 July 1927 "On the State of National Defense" which set the task to rapidly develop

and introduce modern types of tanks and armored vehicles into the army.(1) However, even before its passage work was underway to develop new models of tanks.

In 1923, the Main Directorate of the Military Industry (GUVPI) in which a tank bureau had been established began to take charge of developing new models of armored equipment.

In 1927, a new 5-ton close support tank, the T-16, emerged from the gates of the experimental shop. But on 7-15 June 1927, in the course of its trials, a number of substantial shortcomings was disclosed. The prototype had to be improved. The work continued until November of that year. The designers in the aim of increasing the cross-country capability of the tank somewhat increased the length of its hull and employed large-diameter road wheels. Changes were also made in the engine and these significantly facilitated its servicing. The tank was developed under the index number T-18. Without waiting until the end of the testing work, the USSR RVS [Revolutionary-Military Council] adopted the tank, having given it the name MS-1 (small, support). The T-18 became the base design and in the course of the work on it technical ideas were tested out aimed at improving the new armored equipment. For example, in 1929 they built and in 1931 tested the so-called "maneuvering tank" T1-12 employing the suspension units of the MS-1 tank. The vehicle weighed around 20 tons and was armed with a 45-mm cannon. It differed from the prototype in the presence of a planetary gearbox, a new track tension mechanism floating band brakes. The T1-12 served as a sort of base for developing the new T-24 Soviet medium tank produced in a small series. A particular feature of the latter was the fact that its armor could withstand the fire of large-caliber machine guns, the main antitank weapon of those times.

The MS-1 was the first tank put into domestic series production. The tank hull was assembled from armored sheets using rivets. Its front, back and side parts as well as the turret were manufactured from 16-mm armored sheet. On the roof and the bottom of the hull was 6-mm armor. The tank crew consisted of two men. The battlefield could be observed through narrow viewing slits which had several versions of protection. With insignificant fire the slits could be opened and with heavier fire could be closed with shutters with cross-like slits. In the event of necessity they could be completely closed. The only optical sight was the monocular periscope of the driver.

The tank's weapons were located in the turret. They consisted of a short-barreled 37-mm cannon which was aimed at the target by a shoulder support and a machine gun of the system of V.G. Fedorov, D.D. Ivanov and G.S. Shpagin with a caliber of 6.5 mm. The machine gun had two barrels combined on a single spherical mounting. Its sight device consisted of a diopter located on the casing and a foresight mounted on the forward edge of

the port of the spherical mounting. It was loaded with two magazines with 25 cartridges in each. The rate of fire was 200 rounds per minute. A unit of fire for the weapon included 104 fragmentation high-explosive shells (grenades) and 2,016 cartridges for the machine gun.

The aiming of the cannon at the target, in contrast to the contemporary mountings, was carried out not only by turning the turret but also by moving it in the vertical and horizontal planes in a special armored ball-and-socket bearing. The layout of the vehicle corresponded as closely as possible to the requirements of the times. The specially developed carburetor engine with a power of 35 hp had a common crankcase with a gearbox and was mounted across the hull. This was convenient for the positioning of the crew and ammunition. In endeavoring to increase the maneuvering qualities of the vehicle, the designers employed a suspension with spring shock absorbers and rubberized road and top rollers.

The first 30 MS-1 tanks were delivered by the Bolshevik Plant by May 1929. This series was built using funds of Osoaviakhim [Society for Assistance to the Defense, Aviation and Chemical Construction].(2) In the same year these vehicles participated in the October Parade on Red Square.

In 1930, the tank was modernized: the suspension for the running gear was strengthened by one roller and the design of the tracks was changed. The installing of a new 40-hp engine and the improving of the running gear made it possible to increase the maximum speed of the vehicles up to 22 km an hour.

The armament was also changed. In the turret with an increased rear recess, they mounted the then just developed tank machine gun DT of the V.A. Degtyarev system on a spherical mounting improved by P.S. Shpagin.

Up to 1931, over 900 vehicles of this type were produced. Regardless of the appearance of new improved-design tanks, they continued working to improve the fighting qualities of the MS-1. Experiments were conducted to mount various caliber weapons on the tank, they studied different versions of suspension and sought rational angles for the slope of the front armor and an optimum shape of the turret.

Simultaneously with the development of new models of armored equipment the theory of the combat employment of the tank troops underwent development. In 1927, they published the "Infantry Field Manual" Parts I and II. In the manual the questions of the combat employment of tanks held a significant place. In particular, they examined in detail the employment of these fighting vehicles in close cooperation with the infantry in all types of combat. The most important conditions for success were considered to be: the surprise appearance of tanks among the attacking infantry, their simultaneous and massed employment as a consequence of which

there was the dispersion of the artillery and other anti-tank enemy weapons; the echeloning of the tanks in depth with a presence of a tank reserve; close cooperation of the tanks with the infantry which reinforced the points taken by the tanks.

With the appearance of the MS-1 tanks, the range of battle tasks assigned to the tanks was also widened. The Temporary Instructions on the Combat Employment of Tanks issued in 1928 provided for two types of their employment: in close cooperation with the infantry and their carrying out of independent tasks in the enemy rear (neutralization of artillery, disruption of communications and command). At the same time, a number of articles was published of which of greatest interest were the works of K.B. Kalinovskiy. The questions of the employment of these combat vehicles were profoundly worked out in his articles "Employment of Tanks and Their Cooperation With Infantry" (1927), "Tanks on the Defensive" (1927), "Tanks in Offensive Combat" (1928), "High-Speed Tanks in a Meeting Encounter" (1929) and others.

Soviet military science in the 1930s determined the most effective organizational forms of the armored and mechanized troops.

Tank companies and tank battalions were organized and these were included in the rifle divisions. Mechanized regiments were introduced into the cavalry regiments and armored squadrons into the cavalry brigades. In addition, separate tank brigades, regiments, battalions and companies were organized for reinforcing the combined-arms formations with tanks.

In 1929 they began to organize mechanized formations designed for independent operations. A mechanized regiment was constituted consisting of a tank battalion, a motor vehicle-armored battalion, a motorized rifle battalion and an artillery battery.

The first mechanized brigade was constituted in May 1930. It included two tank battalions, two motorized rifle battalions and a reconnaissance battalion, an artillery battalion and special subunits. The brigade was supplied with MS-1 tanks.

The first experience in the combat employment of domestic serially-produced tanks was gained in the autumn of 1929. Some nine MS-1 tanks took part in the fighting on the Chinese East Railway.

At the beginning of the 1930s, the MS-1 tanks began to be replaced by the more advanced T-26, BT-2 and later the BT-7 and multiturret T-28 and T-35 tanks. Nevertheless, the MS-1 which possessed all the elements of what for then was a modern design completely met the tasks of training the future tank troops.

The fierce nature of the last war and the quantitative and qualitative growth of armored equipment have moved the memory of the first domestic serially-produced tank to the background. For a long time it could not be found in any military museum.

In 1983, in the region of Lake Khasan two tank hulls were found without running gear, weapons and many assemblies and units and armored parts. It turned out that at the end of the 1930s, these tanks had been employed as stationary armored machine gun nests. The weapons had been removed from them and in their place the DT machine guns mounted. Several-score of these small fortresses protected the frontier of the Maritime Province.

The Far Eastern tank troops found blueprints of the tank, they rebuilt the elements of the running gear and replaced the armored parts. Now one of the MS-1 tanks can be seen on the right flank of armored equipment at the exhibit square of the Central Museum of the USSR Armed Forces in Moscow. A second is located at the museum of the Far Eastern Military District.

Footnotes

1. "Voyennyy entsiklopedicheskiy slovar" [Military Encyclopedic Dictionary], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1983, p 595.

2. *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 8 August 1967.

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Front Repair Centers for Armored Equipment
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[Article by Col Ye.V. Ivanov, candidate of technical sciences, docent; Col Yu.A. Panov, candidate of military sciences, docent: "Front Repair Centers for Armored Equipment"]

[Text] During the years of the Great Patriotic War, as there was an increase in the number of tanks and SAU [self-propelled artillery mount], there were not only better methods for the combat employment of the armored and mechanized troops, but also all types of their support, including tank maintenance. During the first months of the war, the improvement in tank maintenance support was carried out chiefly by increasing the number of mobile repair and salvage units and subunits. Thus, by the end of 1942, they had constituted 31 army repair-reconstruction battalions [armeyskiy remontno-vosstanovitelnyy batalon (AVRB)], 59 separate repair-reconstruction battalions [remontno-vosstanovitelnyy batalon (ORVB)], 134 mobile repair bases [podvizhnykh

remontnykh bazy (PRB)], 56 salvage companies [evak-yatsionnykh rot (ER) and 56 damaged vehicle collection points [spornykh punktov avariynykh mashin (SPAM)].(1) This made it possible to provide mobile repair and salvage units not only for the tank (mechanized) corps, the combined-arms and tank armies, but also establish a front reserve the composition of which was determined by the available tanks and sp-guns in the front.

However, regardless of the significant increase in the repair and salvage forces in the troops, it was still not possible to achieve the required effectiveness of the tank maintenance support system. As before, there was a low rate of repairing tanks and sp-guns which had broken down under field conditions. A large number of them had to be sent into the interior of the nation to repair plants.

In order to rectify the situation, it was essential to immediately revise the system for tank maintenance support. The transfer of the repair and salvage units of a front to the armies for the period of an operation did not prove effective. Experience showed that frequently this led to an unequal distribution of forces. As a result, some armies did not have enough production capacity while in others the repair and salvage facilities stood idle due to the absence of repair and salvage equipment.

The offensive operations during the second period of the war required the frequent changing of areas for the repair and salvage units and subunits. To a significant degree this reduced the possibilities of repairs under field conditions, it complicated the supply of spare parts and impeded the use of scarce production equipment (welding units, oxygen stations, lifting and traction equipment).

One of the most rational methods for employing the repair and salvage equipment of the front level was the establishing of temporary formations, front repair centers [frontovykh remontnykh tsentrov (FRTs)]. The basic aim in establishing the FRTs was the centralized use of the front repair and salvage facilities. Such a center for the rebuilding of tanks and sp-guns was organized for the first time in the spring of 1943 on the Western Front (commander of the armored and mechanized troops, Lt Gen Tank Trps D.K. Mostovenko, assistant commander for repairs and supply, Maj Gen Tank Trps I.Ye. Ivanin).

The repair center included the following: the 26th ARVB, the assembly and disassembly companies of the 22d ARVB and the 132d ARVB (one from each battalion), companies for the repairing of the KV and T-34 tanks from the 82d PRB, companies for repairing the T-34 from the central repair plant, the 68th and 69th ER, the 55th SPAM and a department from the 105th Armored Equipment Dump. The work of the FRTs was headed by the senior officer of the repair section of the front's armored directorate, Mil Engr 2d Rank A.U. Tarasenko.(2) The precise organization of technical reconnaissance, salvage and repairs, the strict allocation of tasks and effective leadership over the repair and salvage units made it possible over a period of 2 1/2

months to return to battle vehicles which had undergone not only routine and medium repairs but also a major overhaul. At the same time, they organized the centralized demolition of irretrievably lost vehicles and major overhaul on removed assemblies and units (with the exception of tank engines). However, practice showed that the protracted employment of the mobile repair and salvage facilities on a limited territory reduced the possibility of maneuvering them in the entire front area and increased the time required to concentrate the repair facilities.

During the summer operations of 1943, (Orel, Spas-Demensk) on the Western Front they established several other FRTs, and a standard organizational structure was developed for the repair centers. Within each there should be: two or three PRB, one or two ORVB or ARVB, two or three ER, a SPAM and a department of the front armored equipment dump. The working time at one place was set at not more than 10 days.(3)

A portion of the repair and reconstruction battalions of the FRTs began to be specialized in disassembling the irretrievably lost vehicles and the major overhaul of units (the 20th and 132d ORVB and the 22d ARVB), even including the tank engines. In particular, the 22d ARVB from the summer of 1943 began major overhauls on engines of the V-2 type and this had never been done before under field conditions.

The experience of establishing the FRTs was also employed in the Dukhovshchina-Demidov Offensive Operation (14 September-2 October 1942) of the Kalinin Front. A large portion of the front's repair and salvage units (the 15th and 17th ORVB, the 5th and 122d ARVB, the 17th and 39th PRB, five ER, six SPAM and the 305th Armored Equipment Dump) was used for organizing two FRTs one of which was set up at Pankratovo and designed for actions on the Demidov axis and the other in the Beresnevo area for the Dukhovshchina axis.(4) A smaller portion (the 110th ER, the 113th and 114th SPAM) was left under the front and employed solely for salvage and for loading the vehicles not rebuilt by the front on rail transport at the stations of Chertolino, Nelidovo, Rzhev. The forces of these FRTs in September 1943 carried out medium and major overhauls on 329 tanks and SAU, or almost 75 percent of all the tanks and sp-guns.(5)

During the operations of 1944, the Western and First Baltic Fronts(6) also used a larger portion of the front repair and salvage units in repair centers. Thus, during the period of preparing for the Belorussian Operation on the Third Belorussian Front they set up two FRTs while a portion of the repair and salvage units was employed for reinforcing the army first echelon repair facilities. The first FRTs which was to operate on the Bogushev axis included: the front ORVB, a salvage detachment (EO), a tank disassembly detachment (ORT), a SPAM and a department of an armored equipment dump. The second FRTs (it was to operate on the Borisov axis) was formed from a PRB, EO, ER, ORT, SPAM and a department of an armored equipment dump. The work of the centers was headed by senior

officers from the repair-salvage section of the Directorate of the Commander of the Armored and Mechanized Troops of the Front, Engr-Maj S.P. Shanin and Engr-Lt Col V.A. Bessonov.

After the breaching of the enemy defenses, the rate of advance of the Third Belorussian Front increased sharply, particularly after the commitment to the breach of the horse-mechanized group of Lt Gen N.S. Oslikovskiy (III Guards Cavalry Corps and III Guards Mechanized Corps) on the Bogushev axis and the 5th Guards Tank Army (commander, Mar Armored Trps P.A. Rotmistrov) on the Borisov axis. The TOE repair and salvage units as well as those attached to the units fell 90-120 km behind the troops. Having lost contact with the troops and the army leadership of the tank maintenance support, they sharply reduced the rate of rebuilding broken down tanks and SAU.

The Assistant Commander of the Armored and Mechanized Troops of the Third Belorussian Front for repair and Supply(7) Engr-Col N.M. Zinovyev, in the existing situation, took a decision to remove from army subordination the previously attached repair and salvage facilities and use them to reinforce the front repair centers the operation of which in the given stage of the operation was most effective. The army repair facilities could operate at a single place up to 1.5 day. Their duties basically included routine repairs.

When the troops reached the line of Lepel—Borisov, both assault groupings of the front were turned to the Minsk axis and subsequently to the Vilnius axis. In line with this the repair center operating on the Bogushev axis was also redeployed to the new axis of the main thrust of the front with the task of performing medium and major overhauls in the combat zone of the tank grouping. The second repair center was set up in the area of Osinovka with the task of rebuilding vehicles broken down in the rear zone of the front.

Thus, the maneuvering of the forces of the FRTs began to be carried out not only according to the troop axes but also according to the depth of the tasks being carried out by them. During the period from 23 June through 15 September, some 2,125 tanks and sp-guns requiring repairs were returned to action. Of these, 38 percent was rebuilt by the forces of the FRTs.(8)

In February-March 1944, on the Vitebsk axis they set up three FRTs: the first (the 122d ORVB, the 5th ARVB, the 8th PRB, the 65th SPAM, the 64th and 113th ER) operated in the zone of advance of the 4th Assault Army, the second (17th, 26th and 29th PRB, 52d ER, the 29th Hoist-Salvage Company, the 64th, 93d, 94th and 113th SPAM) was positioned on the axis of the front's main thrust in the zone of the 11th Guards Army, while the third (78th ORVB, 66th SPAM, the 110th ER and a platoon of the 64th ER) was deployed in the zone of advance of the 43d Army.(9)

The FRTs succeeded in cooperating closely with the repair and salvage facilities of the troop level and ensure the prompt and complete collecting of information about broken down tanks and SAU as well as a rational organization of their rebuilding. Due to the successful work of the centers, in February 1944 alone, routine repairs were carried out on 341 tanks and sp-guns, medium repairs on 266 and a major overhaul on 46; 143 vehicles were evacuated from the battlefield to the SPAM while 34 vehicles were sent for major overhaul to the industrial enterprises.(10)

On the First Baltic Front in the course of the Belorussian operation they established initially two repair centers and later on another one. Each of these included one or two ORVB, one or two ER, one or two SPAM and a department of the armored equipment dump. One of the centers operated in the zone of the 6th Guards Army, a second in the zone of the 43d Army and the third in the zone of the 4th Assault Army. The establishing of three repair centers on the front and the introduction of time standards for their work at one place (6-10 days) ensured the wide maneuvering of the repair and salvage units as well as their highly effective use.(11)

The front also established two repair centers during the Riga Operation (14 September-22 October 1944). The first operated in the zone of the 4th Assault Army and the III Guards Mechanized Corps, and the second in the zone of the front's other field forces. Each FRTs had a ORVB, an ER and a SPAM.(12) After the First Baltic Front had received the task of conducting the Memel Operation (5-22 October 1944), the number of repair centers was increased up to three. The first of these was designed to operate on the axis of the main thrust (in the zones of the 6th Guards, 43d and 51st Armies), the second on the Komple-Tilsit axis (in the zone of the 2d Guards Army) and the third was to repair broken down vehicles in the zone of advance of the 4th Assault Army.(13)

Later, in the course of the East Pomeranian Operation (10 February-4 April 1945), the FRTs were also organized on the Second Belorussian Front. Upon the decision of the front's deputy commander of the armored and mechanized troops for supply, repair and salvage (Col Yu.A. Gazenko) in the course of the operation two FRTs were to be established. One of these (four ORVB, two ptrb and two ER) were to operate on the Danzig axis and a second (two ORVB, a ptrb and two ER) on the Gdynia axis. Just during the 15 days of fighting, the FRTs overhauled 170 tanks and SAU.

An analysis of the employment of the FRTs during the years of the Great Patriotic War indicates that they were organized only in the offensive operations and predominantly on two fronts, the Western (Third Belorussian) and the Kalinin (First Baltic), the fighting of which during 1943 and 1944 was carried out under the conditions of wooded-swampy terrain and which had an extremely bad effect on the work of the organic and army elements of the tank maintenance support system, particularly with the highly maneuverable actions of the tank troops. On the other

fronts, with the exception of the Second Belorussian, the FRTs were not organized. Here the repair and salvage units were assigned, as a rule, to the tank armies (tank and mechanized corps) for the period of the entire operation (First Ukrainian and First Belorussian Fronts) or were attached for a certain period of the operation to the corresponding tank (mechanized) field forces and formations, remaining under the operational subordination of the front (Second and Third Ukrainian Fronts).

The composition and number of FRTs in each specific instance depended upon the available forces and upon the methods of employing the armored and mechanized troops. Usually the FRTs included repair and salvage facilities, dumps or their departments with supplies of armored equipment and special subunits for disassembling the irretrievably lost vehicles for spare parts.

The basic advantage of the centralized employment of the front repair and salvage units and subunits was the possibility of the clear and efficient organization of technical reconnaissance, salvage, repair and return of the tanks and SAU to action, that is, the entire essential range of jobs to rebuild during the operation the equipment requiring medium and a significant portion of the major overhauls.

A standard flow sheet for the major overhaul of various types of armored equipment under field conditions was worked out at the FRTs of the Western Front. Later this was widely employed at the other repair centers. As a result of the successful carrying out of this important task, the major overhaul of tanks and SAU at the nation's military plants was sharply reduced. Thus, even in 1944, the amount of work on the major overhaul of tanks carried out by industrial enterprises had declined by one-half in comparison with 1943, while the number of plants involved in this declined by 2.5-fold. At the end of the war this made it possible to convert a portion of these to fulfilling orders for the national economy. The need for rail transport used to dispatch equipment to be overhauled into the interior of the nation was significantly reduced.(14)

The centralizing of the front repair and salvage facilities ensured the execution of more effective technical reconnaissance, the prompt salvaging of broken down vehicles and the rapid concentration of them at the repair facilities. Work with concentrated equipment to be repaired made it possible for the FRTs to increase labor productivity by 1.5-2-fold by constantly improving the production process for the field overhaul of the tanks. With the concentrating of the repair and salvage units in one area, the time allocated for engineer organization could be significantly reduced, and fewer personnel could be assigned for securing and defending the position.

Well organized supply of the repair bodies with spare parts, the extensive use of units and spare parts removed from irretrievably lost vehicles and the major overhaul under field conditions of various assemblies even up to

engines and artillery systems contributed to the extensive introduction of the most progressive unit method of equipment repairs at the FRTs.

The experience of rebuilding armored equipment in the course of combat has not lost its importance in our days. A thorough study of it by the personnel of the maintenance support bodies and the repair-reconstruction units helps to better understand the system for organizing the tank maintenance support for the troops under various natural and climatic conditions.

Footnotes

1. "Tyl Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne, 1941-1945 gg." [Rear Services of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War, 1941-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1977, pp 294, 295.

2. *Voyenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No 3, 1984, pp 51-57.

3. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense, folio 38, inv. 352785, file 57, sheets 60-62.

4. Ibid., inv. 11371, file 47, sheets 58-70.

5. Ibid., folio 235, inv. 2096, file 44, sheet 21.

6. On 20 October 1943, the Kalinin Front was renamed the First Baltic Front while the Western on 24 April 1944 was split into the Second and Third Belorussian Fronts. The headquarters of the Western Front was renamed the Headquarters of the Third Belorussian Front. (See: "Sovetskaya Voenennaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Vol 6, p 518; Vol 3, p 398.)

7. The deputy front (army) commanders of the armored and mechanized troops for repair and supply on 7 August 1944 were renamed the deputy commanders of the armored and mechanized troops for supply, repair and salvage.

8. TsAMO, folio 38, inv. 352785, file 58, sheets 88-90.

9. Ibid., folio 235, inv. 2083, file 59, sheets 3-46.

10. Ibid., sheet 44.

11. Ibid., folio 38, inv. 352785, file 58, sheet 96.

12. Ibid., folio 235, inv. 2088, file 68, sheets 1-32.

13. Ibid., file 213, sheets 60-93.

14. Ibid., folio 38, inv. 352785, file 101, sheets 1, 2, 158.

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